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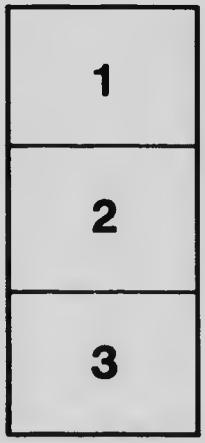

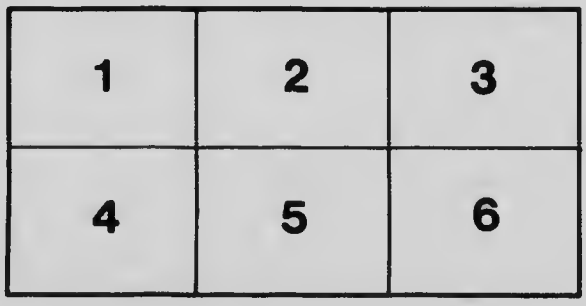

THE LIFE OF THE MASTER

THE MEETING OF JESUS AND MARTHA

I am the resurrection, and the life.—John, XI. 25.

The Life of the Master

By John Watson, D.D.

Ian Maclaren

Author of The Bonnie Brier Bush, The Doctrines of Grace, etc., etc.

William Briggs, Publisher, Toronto
Nineteen Hundred and One

Unto all who love
Him in sincerity

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The paintings by Mr. Corwin Knapp Linson were made especially to illustrate Dr. Watson's work. These paintings, herein reproduced in color, represent the best of the result of several voyages which Mr. Linson made to Palestine, gathering material, studying the types, the landscape and the architecture, so that his work would have, besides its spiritual and reverential inspiration, all the value of genuine documents of the Holy Land, where the manners and customs have hardly changed since the time of Christ.

THE LIFE OF THE MASTER

A Prologue: The Inevitable Christ

IT is mid-autumn as I write, and another year is dying before our eyes. The greenery of June has faded and changed into the colours of decay. At the merest breath the leaves loosen and fall to the ground like rustling rain. The wind gathers them into heaps, or whirls them in circles on the lawn, or scatters them in clouds, or drives them along the open road. Helpless and worthless — the remains of the glory of summer soon to be buried out of sight — the withered leaves affect one with sadness and sympathy. They are a parable of human life, which also has its fleeting seasons and its final disappearance. First comes spring-time, when the buds burst on the branches, and life is a boundless possibility; then follows summer, when life rises to its fulness of strength; by-and-by autumn checks the flow of sap, and begins to detach us from life; and, last of all, winter, with a timely kindness, covers our lives and our faults beneath the cold pure snow. For a day our neighbours speak of us; for a short while the men who served with us in the great enterprise of life miss our presence; for a longer time some friend will recall us; and all her life, till the faithful heart grows cold in death, a woman will keep our memory green. Then the last of those who knew us will also

be covered by the snow, and our remembrance will cease upon the earth.

Among the countless millions of the race a few have defied this law of oblivion, whose leaf has not faded, and whose names cannot be forgotten. Their achievements rise like Alps above the plane of human labour; their services remain the permanent heritage of the race. We are wiser, and stronger, and holier, and gladder, because such men have lived and worked. One opened the kingdom of letters with his poems; another asked for us the deepest questions of the soul in his dialogues; a third discovered a new world, and doubled our dwelling-place; a fourth expounded the secret of the physical universe, and arranged the stars on a map; a fifth cleansed away the corruption of the Church, and restored her strength; and a sixth, the greatest of all, showed unto the world righteousness, and wrote the Ten Words on our conscience. The names of Homer and Socrates, of Columbus and Copernicus, of Luther and Moses, can never be blotted from the pages of human history. In their lives the sap of the race flowered and bore fruit, which has been gathered and stored for all generations. These mighties belong to no country or century; they are citizens of the world, and their fame is ageless.

Their immortality is undeniable and honourable, but yet it is, after all, secondary and impersonal. We venerate them, not for what they were, but for what they did. They are the benefactors of all men, they are not the friends. Apart from their work, they had not passed the frontiers of their town; and if the work be divorced from the man, in him we would have but the slenderest interest. If it be proved that Homer was but a name with which to bind the first sheaf of a golden harvest, if it be insisted that the story of Moses is studded with legends, then we may feel a pious regret; but we shall not be cast down as those who have suffered irremediable

loss. We shall still read the Iliad with enjoyment; we shall still repeat the Commandments with reverence. What are the men to us? Their bequests live for us, the men do not. We have not spoken with them, nor looked into their faces, nor had fellowship with them; to deny their existence or assert their unworthiness were not to rifle the treasures of our soul. We bow before those great ones because they have lived, and are a strength to our humanity, but we do not love them.

One Man has immortality of the first order, who does not live in books or works, but has His eternal home in the heart of His disciples. He is not distant, but present, more real than those we see and touch, to whom an innumerable multitude bow their souls morning and evening every day. If they could be convinced, which is impossible, that Jesus had never lived according to the Gospels, or that if we blew aside the imagination of His friends He was a self-deceived enthusiast, then the faith and hope of millions would be eclipsed and they would fall into despair. Without Jesus risen from the dead and stainless in His perfection, some would hardly care to live, and for Jesus, who left this world almost nineteen centuries ago, more men and women would die than for any other cause on earth, and they would be the best blood of the race. What circumstances lent their help to this Man? What part did He take in face of the world? What means did He use to win this authority? Three years or less was the measure of Jesus' public career, from the day the Baptist declared Him the Lamb of God spoken of by ancient prophecy, to the day when He was offered on the cross as the Passover Lamb according to the prophets. He was born of a nation which had been scattered and peeled — without a king, without liberty, without a voice; a nation suspected, discredited, hated. The son of a peasant mother, he was a carpenter by trade, and a poor man all His days; as soon as He became known to

His people He was persecuted, and in the end condemned to death as a blasphemer. He lived all His days in an obscure province of the Roman empire, about the size of the principality of Wales or the state of New Jersey in the American Union, and was careful not to pass beyond its borders. During His ministry He never wrote a word, and He left no book behind Him; He had no office, no standing, no sword. Was there ever a life so lowly, was there ever one so helpless, as that of Jesus? One had expected that He would hardly have been noticed in His own day, and one had been certain that beyond it none would ever hear His name. With Jesus it is the unexpected which ever happens, and this obscure Man agitated society in His own time as when a great ship passes through a quiet land-locked bay, so that to this day the swell can be felt in the Gospels. No sooner was He born than wise men from the East came to worship Him, and Herod at His own door sent soldiers to murder Him. His own family was divided over Him — His mother, with some fears and doubts, clinging to Him, His brothers refusing to believe in Him. When He had preached for the first time in the synagogue of Nazareth, where He had lived from infancy and every one knew Him, His neighbours were first amazed at His grace, and then in a sudden fury would have flung Him down a precipice. The Council of the nation was divided about Him, certain leaning to His side, and others declaring that no prophet could come out of Galilee; and the people were torn in twain, so many holding that Jesus was a good man, so many that He was a deceiver. If a family was rent in those days, you might be sure Jesus was the cause; and if two people argued in a heat at the corner of a street, the contention would be Jesus. A Roman judge condemned Him, but not before his own wife had interceded for Him; if Roman soldiers nailed Him to the Cross, a Roman officer bore wit-

ness to His righteousness; and if the thief crucified on one side insulted Jesus, the thief on the other side believed in Him. None could be neutral, none could disregard Him: there was a division of the people concerning Jesus.

This controversy will doubtless be laid to rest by His death, and only fill a footnote in the history of the Jewish people—Jesus of Nazareth, a local agitator and heretic, crucified under Pontius Pilate, about 33. Nothing could be more unlikely than that a commotion in a petty province should affect pagan society, and a Galilean prophet arouse the Roman Empire. The attitude of Rome to all religions was consistent and characteristic—a policy of cynical contempt and worldly opportunism. Gods no doubt there were, and this was, on the whole, the misfortune of the race. Each nation had its own particular deities, and knew best how to propitiate them. Let each manage its own religion, and on no account interfere with that of another people. Upon those terms the provincial might worship his god after any fashion he pleased, and Rome would secure him liberty of conscience. Rome, as the ruler of the world, also gave hospitable welcome to foreign deities in the capital, and honoured them in a Pantheon. The most opposite cults flourished side by side in one family, and we would have said that one religion more would have made little difference. As it happened, however, the faith of Jesus was so virile and assured, so insistent and aggressive, that it came as a living torch into society, and set every man on fire as friend or foe. Roman magistrates, accustomed to compromise, and anxious at any cost to keep good order, were reduced to despair, and were compelled to persecute Jesus in the person of His apostles. Within a century the Nazarene had rent the empire in twain, and put all the gods to open shame.

Nor was it enough for this exacting personality that His presence threw the multitude into confusion and changed the

market place into a battle-ground. He invaded the schools and gave a new task to philosophy. For a while it was enough for the disciples of Jesus to believe in Him; by-and-by they began to speculate about Him. It was a matter of intellectual necessity to ask who He was, and with that question was added a new science, the most subtle, the most majestic, the most daring of all the departments of ordered knowledge. Theology began her work when the ancient learning was dying; she opened a new means of culture when the former was exhausted. Never had the human intellect faced so mysterious a problem as the person of Christ, never has there been a controversy so keen and so absorbing. Philosophy, abandoning the world of abstract ideas, gave her energy to the study of facts,—the facts of Jesus' life; and on the life and death of this crucified prophet, scholarship, baptised from paganism, created the Christian doctrine, as to this day it is scholarship which argues and defends the dogmas of the Christian Faith. It came to pass that One Who was despised in His own day and by His own people, because He had not letters, has opened a school wherein the master thinkers of the race have been working ever since with mixed joy and despair.

Once this Man had established Himself in history He became a permanent factor, a disturbing force never to be evaded, ever to be reckoned with. As a rock standing out from the midst of a stream, upon Jesus has the current of human life and thought beat and been broken from the first centuries to the nineteenth. The great movement of the Middle Ages was the Crusades, and therein the chivalry of the West flung itself on the East, for the most romantic end, to recover the tomb of Jesus from the Saracen. The Reformation opened the modern age; and while many causes fed its strength, the deepest was the relation of the human soul to Jesus. No wars have been so fierce or relentless as the wars of religion, which have drenched

many lands in blood, and without Jesus of Nazareth they had never been known. As he moves down the paths of the West, kings and peoples seize their swords; Jesus confounds politics and commerce; He lights the fires of persecution and fierce debate; He creates inquisitors and martyrs; no ruler could make a plan without counting in Jesus; no treaty could stand unless it had Jesus' name; no peace could last a month unless it had His blessing.

It may seem that in our century we have thrown off this dominion of Jesus and are able to forget Him, but it is only an affectation of indifference. Never were there so many lives of Jesus written; never so much attention given to His actual words; never such anxiety to send forth His Gospel. Were a parchment discovered in an Egyptian mound, six inches square, containing fifty words which were certainly spoken by Jesus, this utterance would count more than all the books which have been published since the first century. If a veritable picture of the Lord could be unearthed from a catacomb, and the world could see with its own eyes what like He was, it would not matter that its colours were faded, and that it was roughly drawn, that picture would have at once a solitary place amid the treasures of art. A vast number of persons are interested in the question of evolution, solely because it may affect the position of Jesus, and they would accept it at once were they convinced that the new principle had a rightful place for the Master. While we are silent, we are also nervously conscious of Jesus; at a hint of His appearance we do Him homage.

If one desired to realise how this Jew—His words, His life, His spirit,—has been woven into the warp and woof of life, let him imagine the effect of Jesus' influence removed as by a stroke and the pattern which remains. One would then see a city dotted with empty places, which are covered neither by grass nor flowers, where once had stood churches, orphanages,

asylums, and hospitals. The whole machinery of charity and philanthropy would have disappeared, together with every monument to pity. Libraries would remain, but they would be robbed of those noble classics of many tongues which owe their genius and charm to the Master. There might still be galleries, but without Raphael, Michelangelo, Fra Angelico, Da Vinci, from whom their subjects and their inspiration had been taken. Music, in her most searching and solemn notes, would be no longer heard in that place; and if law be administered, it would be stripped of its majesty and life. Exchanges would be open, but the Sermon on the Mount would no longer restrain the madness of competition, and the injustice of the strong; and there would be prisons, as in the pagan days, but places now for punishment only, not for remedy. The city would still be there with only a few buildings wanting, but they would be the monuments to kindness, to mercy, to hope, to God. It would be a city despiritualised, from which the visible glory of religion had departed.

And still one has not appreciated the continual and pervasive influence of Jesus in present-day life. It is more subtle and convincing than can be proved by any building or book: it is an atmosphere into which we have been born and which we breathe, of which we are unconscious, and which we may allow ourselves sometimes to deny. The home of which we are part has been created by Christ, and its arrangements are instinct with His Spirit. Whatever is pure and merciful and spiritual and unselfish in social life, flows from His influence; and the very motives which regulate our best deeds, and to which we appeal in another man, have been implanted by the unseen hand of the Master. The most beautiful type of character, that of humility and tenderness, has been reared in the school of Jesus, although in many a case the pupil does not know his teacher; and the most violent attacks on Christianity have

only been possible because they have been made under the toleration of Jesus. There is no place where one could live with his family in peace and pursue the highest ends of life unless Jesus had been there before; and if the spirit of Jesus were withdrawn, modern civilisation would in three generations return to the morality of paganism. If any one should have the heart to criticise the Gospel of Jesus, he will find that the best person he knows is pursuing Jesus' ideal; and if any one had the audacity to deny that Jesus ever lived, he would next moment touch the Master, living now, in one of His disciples.

It is the life of this Man we shall now study, and after a plan which will not compete with biographies which have been written by learned persons and are in our hands. We shall not endeavor to compass every detail of the Master's life from Bethlehem to Calvary, nor shall we weary any reader with questions of order, for indeed the chronology and harmony of the Gospels are past finding out by ordinary folk. It will be assumed that in the four Gospels we have sufficiently accurate accounts of how Jesus carried Himself to His fellow-men, and what He did on certain occasions before their eyes, and what befell Him at their hands. And various incidents will be selected and grouped into chapters, each complete in itself and each affording a facet of the whole. We do not dare to promise that after he has read the last page of the *Life of the Master* he will be wiser on a site or a date, but we dare to hope that he will have a clearer vision of the august Figure Who invites the judgment of each man's conscience, Who lays His hand on each man's heart.

Chapter I: The Fulness of Time

NO one can study any of the great movements which have made history without observing that it had two conditions—there was the man, and he came at the time. Certain ideas had long been simmering in the popular mind, a train of circumstances had been laid, a multitude was ready to rise; but these were only forerunners, anticipations, auxiliaries. Nothing would have come to pass, and the morning glow would have faded into darkness, had not the secret yearning in many hearts taken shape in a single man. No one could have foretold his origin; no one can take credit for training him; no one can boast afterwards of having been his colleague. From behind the veil he comes—from a palace, or from a cottage, or from a college, or from a desert. Upon him is laid one burden, and he rests not till it be fulfilled; he is incalculable, concentrated, forceful, autocratic. Now he is the idol of the people; now he is their victim; he is ever independent of them, and ever their champion. They may not understand him, yet he expresses them; they may put him to death, yet he accomplishes their desire. These are the makers of the race through whom God intervenes in human history, and the chief in whom God became incarnate was Jesus.

Between the man and his time there must be a certain correspondence, else he cannot have full course. Nothing is more pathetic than the experience of one who has arrived too soon, delivering a message which will be understood to-morrow, but which to-day is a dream; attempting a work which to-morrow the world will welcome, which to-day it considers madness. He dies of a broken heart an hour before sunrise. Nothing is more ironical than the effort of one who has arrived too late, for whom there was an audience yesterday, for whose cause there was an opportunity; but now the audience has dispersed, and the field is taken; he has missed his tide, and for him another will not come. It may be said that Jesus was independent of time and environment. As a person, yes! Who never could have been hid or altogether have failed. As a worker, no! for this were to ask an endless miracle. Had Jesus come in Samuel's day, no one would have understood His Kingdom; had He come in the second century, there had been no opening for His Kingdom. There was a brief space when the life seed of Hebrew thought was ready for the sower, and the Roman Empire still remained a quiet field for the sowing. This was the fulness of time, and Jesus appeared.

For the supreme success of the enterprise four conditions were necessary, and the first was apostles. Within a province Jesus achieved His victory over sin and the world; to Jewish congregations and a handful of personal friends He gave His Gospel; but this was only the battle-ground of a few fields on which the fate of empires hung. It was for the world Jesus died at Jerusalem; it was the world He would teach in the synagogue of Capernaum. For this purpose it was necessary to have messengers to carry the tidings of this work and word unto the ends of the known earth. Without them He had been helpless — a provincial, teaching and dying in obscurity, a name in the annals of the day, a Saviour thwarted of His opportunity. Yet

RACHEL'S TOMB

And Rachel died and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem. And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave; that is the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day.—Genesis, XXXV. 19-20.

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where can the apostle of such a mission be found? How generous and catholic must be his equipment! Gifts the most splendid and the most opposite must be combined in him; his must have been experiences the most profound and the most contradictory. For this envoy of Jesus must be immovable in his own convictions, else he will be a reed in the outer wind; and he must be universal in his sympathies, else he will have no access to strange minds. He must be one who carries one land in his heart that he may be loyal; yet one at home in all lands, that he may understand the Kingdom of God. He must be strong, hardy, determined, fearless; for his rôle will be martyrdom; he must be sensitive, susceptible, emotional, for he preaches the Evangel. He must be firmly, even fiercely, moral, since his cause is built on the Eternal Law; he must be saturated with religion, since he is the preacher of grace. Intense, patriotic, robust, legal, also cosmopolitan, accommodating, delicate, spiritual. This man seems an impossible demand until one remembers the Jew. The whole world and all ages could not afford so perfect an ambassador for Jesus as a Jew of His own day. We are accustomed to speak of the training of the twelve Apostles, and we mean the three years with Jesus; we have limited the time. The Jew began to be trained say two thousand years before, when Abraham heard the inward call of the Eternal and set out on his Divine quest. He had been separated that he might be open to receive a new revelation; he had been secluded that he might learn the lesson of the One God; he had been scattered that he might see the world-life; he had been brought back that he might wait for the Messiah. Shut in by desert and sea, he had been in the very heart of things; tried and persecuted, he had learned the idea of sacrifice. Visited by prophets, he had his eyes on the future; and his worship a poem, he was filled with spiritual dreams. Polytheism was burnt out of him by coals of fire; monotheism had been

wrought into the very texture of his soul by deliverances, mercies, revelations. There was no city where this exile could not make himself at home, manipulate affairs, gain the ear of women, creep into courts, affect thought. Yet with every emigration he clung more fondly to Jerusalem. Never has any one cast a faster anchor or swung by a longer chain; never could any one be more inflexible or more supple, more devoted to the past, or more open to the present, more absolutely himself, more entirely a citizen of the world. Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah, the anonymous writers of Jonah and Ecclesiastes, Maccabean patriots and Apocalyptic seers, had all done their part to educate the evangelist of the world, and it only remained that Jesus should select the flower of the race, should sanctify them by His Spirit, and charge them with His sublime message.

Another imperative condition for the inauguration of Jesus' enterprise was a way. It would have availed little that Jesus had lived and the Apostles had been prepared if they had been confined to the Holy Land — imprisoned evangelists without access to another country. Had their mission been at an earlier time, this would have been their hopeless defeat; for then every nation stood apart from its neighbour — isolated, suspicious, hostile. For the evangelising of the world in such circumstances Jesus must have been born into a hundred peoples, and among each have reared His apostolate. A forerunner was needed in the vast outer world of the Gentiles, as the Baptist went before the face of the Messiah in Jewry, to make the crooked places straight and the rough places plain that there might be a highway for the Lord. This was the high office of Rome, which laboured in unconscious alliance with Jerusalem for the coming of Jesus. Unto this power had been given by the Eternal not only a stout heart and the genius of war, but the noble virtues of justice and peace. Not only had Rome attacked and con-

quered nation after nation, with her fine genius for government she had also conciliated and pacified. All subjugated peoples became integral and willing provinces of the Empire. The world was a single state in the first century, with one capital, one ruler, one law. From Rome the open way ran by land and sea unto the distant frontiers, and along it the Roman citizen journeyed in the peace of Rome and under the protection of the Eagles. Her roads, straight and strong, can still be seen, after all these centuries, in England and other lands, and they are the silent witnesses not only to her work of civilisation, but also to her mission of religion. Her High Priest was called with strict justice the Chief Bridge-Maker, for it was her high part to lay in many a morass the sure foundations of law, and to cast over many a dividing stream the bridge of human unity. She stretched her highways and she set up her bridges that the chariot of Cæsar might run smoothly thereon; and afterward came the Prince of Peace, whose kingdom was to extend where the Eagles had [illegible] flown, and to weld unheard-of peoples in a more lasting [illegible]

The third condition for the success of Jesus was a tongue. What would avail a prepared messenger and an unfettered passage if there were no common speech between the people and the preacher? No barrier surely is so hopeless and exasperating as confusion of tongues; for here are two men who have foregathered from the ends of the earth, and have met in peace, who are in sympathy with one another, and have something to say, and they have no medium. To-day one of the initial and gigantic labours of the missionary of Christ's Cross is to master the language of foreign peoples; and one of the brilliant achievements of Christian scholarship has been to reduce to order the speech of a savage tribe, and to save it forever from oblivion by placing in its charge the Evangel of Jesus. This is possible in these later days, because the Church has been the heir of the past,

with treasures of wealth and learning, because the science of language is full-grown, and the instruments of knowledge are unlimited. This endeavour had been vain in that day when Jesus sent forth His first heralds to go into all the world with the news of His salvation. If only there were a language not confined to a single province, but understood round the shores of the whole Mediterranean! Not austere and merciless like the Hebrew, the language of the law; nor formal and inflexible, the language of rule; but gracious and persuasive—a fitting instrument for the message of grace. One has the instinct that there ought to have been a language prepared for the declaration of the Gospel, and that people should have been trained in its use. And this very thing had come to pass in the world of Jesus' day, for there was a conspiracy of nations to prepare the way for our Master. If the Hebrew discipline trained His missionaries, and Roman authority got them access, Greece provided them with a speech perfect for its high purpose. A Jew spoke a dialect of Hebrew; any one who moved in public life knew the phrases of official Latin; but every person, from Jerusalem to Rome, spoke and understood Greek. It was the neutral ground where strangers met, the free speech where all stood equal. For a time the dream of a universal speech had been realised, and the catastrophe of Babel had been repaired. If the world had waited long for such a universal speech, it was worthy of the Evangel of Jesus when it came. No choicer vehicle for the reasonable and winsome message of the Master could be imagined than the language of Homer and Plato,—so soft and persuasive that it offered the invitation of Jesus with something of the grace that was poured into His own lips; so flexible and adaptable that it could create new words for the profound mysteries and beautiful experiences of a Heavenly Faith; so philosophic and exact that it would embody the speculations and dogmas of a new science of religion. So perfect is this harmony

that it seems as if the Evangel had been preparing for centuries for its Greek dress, and the liquid Greek speech had been brought to its perfection to clothe, and, if that were possible, adorn the words of Jesus.

And one other condition remaineth, and that is that there be a desire, for there was a time when the world would have given no welcome to Jesus, for it had no need of Him. There was a day, in the youth of the world, when the spirit of man awoke and rejoiced in the splendour and abundance of physical nature; when it was enough that the sky was blue, and the grass was green, and the blood was red, and the body was strong. This was the age of paganism, with its jocund gods and gay freedom, its frank worship of the senses, and ignorance of shame. When the race was drinking the new wine of the first vintage, and its head was crowned with roses, the pale Nazarene with His Cross had been a spectre at the feast. By-and-by the cup of pleasure will sink to the dregs, and sated disgust settle on the soul. Weary men will seek for a new sensation in loathsome lusts, and Rome be filled with unspeakable religions of the East. Then it is time for the Holy Child. There was also a day in the manhood of the Race when its nobler minds could no longer be satisfied with appearances; they were touched by a Divine curiosity to know what was behind, and they set out on the quest of the unseen. This was the age of philosophy, which faced the mystery of life, and analysed the contents of the human mind, and searched into the system of things, and unveiled the world of ideas. When it seemed possible that the eternal secret could be discovered by reason, then thinkers were not prepared to receive the sublime intuitions of Jesus. It was different when philosophy had grown feeble and lost heart, when the tides had sunk to low water, and this was its highest mark: "To the unknown God." If any one can solve the great problem on another line, and can give pledges of certainty,

the world is ready to hear him now with open thirsty heart. This was the day for the Master. And there came to the world a day when the law of righteousness, long held in solution in the universal conscience, crystallised in the Ten Words, and the most intense nation in the world gave all its strength to the keeping thereof till the Prophets continually called their people to the judgment of this standard, and the Psalmist sang its praises, declaring it to be sweeter than honey, more precious than gold. So long as the perfection of the law seemed within reach, it had been vain to appear as a Saviour; when the law had reduced pious and honest hearts to despair, and changed the shallow and narrow people into hypocrites, the hour of Jesus was at hand. The world was ready for a Redeemer. Naturalism, philosophy, and law had been the preparation for Jesus, Whom Plato and Virgil foretold; Jesus answered the desire of all nations, and came into a prepared heritage when He said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

Chapter II: The Generation of Jesus

SOME teachers have been so bound up with their own generation that they have been strangers in the outer world—like plants which flourish in one zone and die in the next. Their message may have been effectual, but it was provincial; their accent may have been forceful, but it was a dialect. They are the prophets of a day, the leaders of a local cause, the children of their circumstances. Other teachers, the select few of history, have had such a breadth of thought, such a grasp of principles, such a spring of humanity, that their work could not be confined, but has touched the race. The greatest souls cannot be nationalised, they are cosmopolitans; they need not be dated, they belong to all time. They defy the limitations of language, the paralysis of traditions, and the barriers of geography. What they say is true in the first century and in the nineteenth: it is said with perfect simplicity which is unfettered by any form; it has the universal note. In this class one places Isaiah and St. John, but above all the prophets Jesus possesses the ages. The Master transcends all the conditions which fetter and localise ordinary men. It were possible for one to live by His words although he did not know where Jesus had been born or how He lived.

It remains, however, that one gains without measure, if he not only has the Master's word but also its environment. Jesus did at times set Himself to speak in fulfilment of a fixed purpose, as in the Sermon on the Mount, or in the Upper Room, but far more frequently He spake upon occasion. He answered a question, He corrected a mistake, He defended himself against an attack. Jesus was never isolated and indifferent in the midst of the intense human life of His day: He was played upon from every side; He was responsive even to a look. Those people who loved or hated Him, studied, criticised, admired, slandered Him, are the first commentators on the Lord's words. They called them forth; they dictated their form; they sharpened their edge. His generation was the mould into which the molten gold of Jesus' speech ran, and therefore one who desires to appreciate not only the unchangeable and eternal value of the Master's teaching, but also its perfect form, must give some thought to His contemporaries. It is useful to know the geography of the Holy Land, and the customs of the people in the days of the Lord, but ten times more vital to have in our minds the four representative men whom He faced, with whom He dealt, and who made His generation.

The first is a Pharisee, who was in evidence during Jesus' whole public career, and whose name is now the byword of religious speech. It were too late in the day to offer an apology for this man, or to repeal his just condemnation, but it is needful to understand him. If we consider him as nothing more or less than an ignorant bigot or an unscrupulous hypocrite, we cannot hope to understand the inwardness of the public duel which lasted for two years at least between him and Jesus. Such a Pharisee — one who was a mere travesty upon morality — could never have won the suffrages of the Jewish people; such an opponent could never have defeated Jesus, even for a day, even in appearance. The Pharisee must once have won the respect

of his nation; he must still be giving some pledges of sincerity, and, as a matter of fact, a good case could be made for the average Pharisee. His was the patriotic party which, from the time of Ezra, and through the heroic struggle of the Maccabees, when the priests were their allies, sustained the national spirit and repudiated the foreign yoke. His ideal of God's commonwealth may have been narrow, but it was intense; his attitude to the outside world may have been bitter, but it was sincere. His social ritual was burdensome and absurd, but it was well-intentioned and had its strength in conscience: it was an honest effort to guard the religious life of the family from the corruption of intercourse with strangers and sinners. One great service, beyond all question, was rendered by the Pharisee, for he preserved the revelation of his fathers with unswerving loyalty, and in especial defended its late but priceless addition,—faith in immortality and the unseen world. For his patriotism and courage, for his conscientiousness and spirituality, the Pharisee ought to be approved. He had at least a just pride in his nation's past; he was not willing to gather gain out of the foreign oppression; he believed with all his soul in the destiny of the Jew, and was ready to make the last sacrifices to maintain it inviolate. It is the degeneration of the best which makes the worst; and it is one of the paradoxes of history that this man, who was in his full intention the loyal heir of his fathers and the jealous custodian of the national treasures, should be the opprobrium of the Gospels, and should deal the death-stroke of his people. From our distance it is a light task to explain his declension: it has its analogy in every age. The Pharisee believed so blindly in the God of the fathers that he was not able to believe in the God of the children, considering revelation to be closed; he honoured so utterly the good men of the past that he supposed wisdom to have died with them, counting tradition as sacred as the law; he clung so fiercely to his own

conception of the Messiah that his mind was sealed against light—receiving a spiritual Christ as an impostor. His earnestness had degenerated into fanaticism, his conscientiousness into unreality, his resolution into obstinacy, till vain customs were more to him than righteousness, till he hated the very goodness of God when it was incarnate before his eyes. Under the Pharisees sin had captured religion. From almost the first, and certainly to the last, of Jesus' public life, the Pharisee was His watchful, ingenious, ungenerous, unrelenting foe; and as we follow the Master's history our anger will be hot against the Pharisee, and we shall wish to stone him; but let us be sure that we have the right. Would we have been broader and wiser than this man had we lived in his day and been fed on his doctrines? Suppose that the Master had come at the opening of the twentieth century, which prides itself upon its light and charity, and carried Himself after a similar fashion to that which offended the people of the first century; had He brushed aside the dogmas of our day and our religious customs, our traditions of the elders, and our washing of hands; had He avoided the circles of professional religionists in every city and associated Himself with disreputable people—would His holiness and His grace have protected Him from censure and slander and persecution? Had He been a minister of religion, would He not have been deposed from His office? had He been a layman, would He not have been put under the ban of the Church? and is any man so convinced of his own insight and charity as to be sure that he would not have had his share in this injustice?

The second man Jesus met was the Sadducee; and although there may be some dispute as to the origin of his name there is none regarding his party. The Sadducees may or may not have been the descendants of the great priestly family of Zadok, they certainly formed a priestly caste. If the Pharisees were the national party, and with all their faults and limitations they did

represent the mind of the nation, the Sadducees constituted the aristocracy. The priests were the only hereditary order in the nation. They had an assured position which could not be shaken without dissolving the nation. They had a large revenue from the Temple taxes, and, in the case of their chief families, immense power in high positions. An aristocracy of this kind may at a time share the national aspirations and make sacrifices for the commonwealth, and it is never to be forgotten that the Maccabees were priests, but there must always be a rift between an aristocracy and a democracy, and a tendency to separate. The aristocracy is maintained at the cost of the people; its members have no share in the struggles of the people; it is able to defy the wishes of the people. From the days of Aaron, who hindered Moses and taught Israel to worship the golden calf, on to the days of Caiaphas, who secured the crucifixion of Jesus, the priests of Israel had, with here and there a noble exception, been a curse rather than a blessing to the nation. They reached in Jesus' time their height of ambition and pride and insolence and worldliness. Nor did their priestly office, with its sacred duties, in any way redeem the order; it rather added to the chief priests their last offence from a Jewish and religious standpoint. It was necessary for such ecclesiastics of high estate to believe with all their might in what was unseen and eternal, and to live humbly, or it was inevitable that they would be blinded by this present world and become ambitious. For one to offer solemn sacrifices unto God and not continually realise Him, for one to receive great gain from the discharge of religious duties and regard them only as a lucrative superstition, must end in utter scepticism and moral deterioration. And this is what came to pass with the Jewish priests of high rank. While it was part of their craft to uphold the sacrificial law and make much of the Temple, the Sadducees had ceased to hold the faith of the unseen,—the existence of spiritual beings, the immortality of

the soul, and the Divine government. They were the agnostics of the day, and the worst of agnostics—worldly and unbelieving ecclesiastics—whose most perfect parallel is Pope Leo X., that son of the pagan renaissance, to whom Luther was a mad monk, and Leo's court, to which the rites of the Christian faith were a jest.

As one may imagine, this party was hated by the people on the two sufficient grounds of their unbelief and their pride, and, with the people as judges, it had no chance against the Pharisees. The Sadducees did not lay themselves out to win the suffrages of the people—it was enough that they obtained the money of the people; their energy was given to alliances with the Romans and the Herods, whereby they might gain practical power and add to their social comfort. They did not count as a factor in the national thought or life, holding neither the national faith nor sharing the national hope, while they put to shame the ancient religion of Israel and preyed as vampires on the resources of the poor. Until the close of His life, Jesus came neither into collision nor contact with the hierarchy, so that while one hears at every turn of the Pharisees, one has no complaint of their opponents. This was not, of course, because the Sadducees had the slightest sympathy with Jesus; it was simply because He was beneath their notice. If they had ever heard of Him—and, no doubt, His enthusiastic effort to cleanse the Temple for the moment compelled their attention—He would seem to them simply an illiterate person and a vulgar agitator, another fanatic such as the popular religion bred from time to time. So long as Jesus confined Himself to preaching His ideas and arguing with the Pharisees He gave the Sadducees no concern. When evidence was at length brought before the leaders of the priestly aristocracy that Jesus had made an attack on the Temple, and that their gains were in danger, then the proud isolation and contemptuous indifference of the

aristocracy were thrown to the winds, and they fell into a vulgar frenzy of hatred. While Jesus only taught the reality of everlasting life and opposed to sense the visions of the Father's house and the holy angels the Sadducees maintained their high composure. When Jesus, as was supposed, would reduce their income these superior people condescended to the last meanness to send Him to the cross. This could be said in defence of the Pharisees, that if they were fanatics, it was for dogma; this must be said in exposure of the Sadducees, that they were fanatics for their pockets. When these dignified aristocrats changed into a disorderly rabble, clamouring for Jesus' death, it was not faith but greed which excited them. Theirs was that form of culture which is able to treat with contempt the august verities of religion, but is goaded into fury by the loss of a few shekels.

Behind the Pharisees and Sadducees was another party which stands in the shadow and which has been the cause of much controversy. Its name does not occur in the Gospels and Jesus does not once mention it, but it is a grave question whether He is not thinking of its members where He refers to those who voluntarily refrain from marriage, and whether he does not so far approve their spirit in His directions of poverty and unworldliness. Perhaps one comes nearest the truth about the Essenes in considering them to be the religious extremists, just as the Zealots were the political extremists of the Jewish faith. The Essenes could be found in towns, but for the most part they lived in villages and communities, where they could carry out their habit of life more perfectly. They were arranged in ranks of increasing severity and deeper knowledge; they were celibates, but were ready to adopt children and bring them up in their fellowship; they bathed frequently in cold water and wore white garments; they laboured with their hands and had a common purse. Their life was that ideal of simplicity and purity which has ever floated before the minds of the saints and has been

chiefly loved in evil days, when faith and righteousness have almost died out of the land. Allowing for circumstances, the Essenes were the forerunners of the Anchorites of the desert and the associates of St. Francis, and the "Friends of God" of the Middle Ages, and certain modern communities which have attempted the common life. It is impossible to doubt that the sacrifice and devotion of the Essenes must have told on the religious spirit and practice of the day; it also proves the impotence of the secluded and monastic life that in the great controversies of that day and in the historical movement of Jesus these interesting people had no share. They mourned the backsliding of the day and despaired of the Kingdom of God, so they withdrew themselves: others waited and prayed for that Kingdom in the ways of daily life, and to them the Kingdom came and they helped in its foundation. Because the Essenes left their brethren that they might save their own souls they were in turn left alone; and because Peter and John remained in their places as the salt of Bethsaida and Capernaum they were called to be Jesus' Apostles and to be the salt of the world.

If those parties only had made up the nation in the day when Jesus began His work, it had fared ill for disciples, but there was then, as there is ever, a body of people whom the Sadducees despised for their lowliness, and the Pharisees for their simplicity, and whom the Essenes censured as too much concerned with this world, but who were the clean, honest soil for the Evangel. They were quiet, modest, reverent, well-living folk, who quarrelled with none, contemned none, judged none, but desired for themselves the best things of the soul and received them thankfully from any quarter. This party, the party of goodness, was scattered up and down all the land, and to it belonged the village maiden of Nazareth to whom the Angel Gabriel appeared, and Joseph the carpenter, and Simeon, who waited for the consolation of Israel, and Anna, the prophetess,

who served God night and day, and certain young fishermen of Galilee. Unto this kind of people Jesus made His appeal, and they heard His voice: from them He made His disciples, and called His Apostles, and with their hearts full of love to God and man, He laid the foundations of His Kingdom, and with the same He builds it up from age to age.

Chapter III: The Idyll of Bethlehem

NO event is so charged with meaning as a birth; nothing is so incalculable as a young child. Unto sight what is it?—a tiny, helpless, dependent morsel of life, unable to think, unconscious of itself, with no speech but a wail. Blot it out, who had missed this creature save its mother? What had the world lost? Nothing save a unit out of millions, another labourer, perhaps another criminal. Unto vision a new force enters into life with the coming of a child, whether he be born in a cottage or a palace. What impresses a thoughtful person as he looks on an infant is not its futility, but its possibility; not what it is, but what it is going to become. One person has ever something of this imagination. As she looks on her babe's face, his mother dwells on a hundred signs which, to her fondness, prophesy the coming greatness, and she treasures them up in her heart. She is shy, and guards these prophecies jealously; it may be that they will be but spring blossom to be scattered by the wind, but it may also be that they will set into the fruit of autumn. Geography may yet be rearranged, or history rewritten, or nations redeemed, or the unseen revealed, by this little one when God's hand is on him and he comes into His Kingdom. Has it not

happened that a single year is lifted out of a century and a day therein glorified, because on that day a poet, a painter, a conqueror, an apostle, has been born. A child was born in a roadside inn nineteen hundred years ago, and time has been redated from that day.

Unto those who had eyes to see and a soul to understand, the Nativity was attended by favourable omens in heaven above and on the earth beneath. The story is told in St. Luke's Gospel with a very delicate and lovely touch, and the atmosphere is one of great joy and spiritual expectation. The coming of Jesus was heralded and celebrated by songs which have passed into the praise of the Christian Church. They all sang who had to do with the Holy Child—the angels who escorted Him from the heavenly places and bore the message of the Divine goodwill; Elizabeth, as she received her young kinswoman, and did honour to the mother of her Lord; Zacharias, whose son was to run before his face clad in camel's hair and girt with a leather girdle; Simeon, who was to hold the Infant Messiah in his arms and be ready to die in peace; and chiefly the Blessed Virgin, on whom the very crown of motherhood rested. The heavens shed forth their light on earth, and a star rested above Bethlehem. Wise men from afar—the ambassadors of the great, and shepherds from the flocks—the ambassadors of the poor came and knelt by this cradle, where the hope of ages has been fulfilled, and God Himself has entered into human life.

Between the outer circumstances and the inner spirit of an event there is a quickening contrast, so that a tyrant is born in a palace and dies upon a scaffold, so that a prophet is born in a cottage and lives forever in a nation's heart, and there are two scenes of the Nativity. One is what appeared unto every traveller who happened to rest that night at Bethlehem and was an eyewitness of the chief incident in human history. What he saw was a roadside inn of the East, a place of four bare walls with

SHEPHERDS ABIDING IN THE FIELD

And there were in the same country, shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.—St. Luke II. 8.

the sky for roof, where each traveller made his own provision and created his own comfort. One part was raised a foot or two above the ground, and possibly divided into compartments, and there the first comers had spread their beds and were resting in peace. The lowest space was filled with beasts—camels, oxen, horses, asses, as they could be arranged, a mass of hungry, struggling, evil-smelling life. Into this rude stable came two people, a man and his wife, for whom no place could be found among the travellers. For the woman, in her hour of agony and need, some corner was made, whence the beasts had been driven, and there, beside the wearied beasts of burden, fighting for their food beneath the open sky, with none to attend her save this faithful man, the Virgin brought forth her Child and laid Him among the straw in the place where the beasts ate their food. No outcast of the highways or the streets came into this world more humbly than our Master.

Ancient piety shrank as by a natural instinct from those ignoble and squalid circumstances, and has given us a Nativity wherein we all delight. The scene is shifted from that cheerless, inhospitable khan to some cave in the hillside near Bethlehem, which a legend makes the birthplace of Jesus. It is filled with soft, heavenly light, and the angels keep guard over the entrance. His mother and Joseph kneel and worship the Babe, round Whose head the halo shines and Whose face is the mirror of heaven. The wise men open their coffers, and lay their treasures at the feet of the Child, the shepherds do homage with adoring faces, while some gentle animals in the background represent the lower creation at this shrine of holiness. Here, indeed, is a narrow space, but it is full of Heaven; here is lowliness, but no indignity; here is weakness, but also reverence. It requires but a stroke of pious imagination, and the stone roof of the humble cave is changed into an arched cathedral, and the place of the Child into the high altar with its radiant glory,

and these people of all degrees into the crowd which with one accord falls down at the lifting of the Crucified.

With the after-look the disciples of Jesus may prefer to see the inner glory of His Nativity rather than its outer circumstances; but no one would desire that these should have been different. Had Jesus been born in a palace or rich man's house, had He received instant attention and homage, then His birth had not corresponded with His after life, and it would not have been in keeping with Himself. For He was to show unto all ages that the greatest force in life is not position nor wealth, but character, and that character is independent of all circumstances, so that goodness, cradled and reared in poverty, without advantages and without favour, persecuted and slain, is yet the most beautiful and triumphant power on earth. Before this infant, so inhospitably received by the world, lay the cruelty of Herod, and the narrow lot of Nazareth, and the homeless mission of Galilee, and the contempt of the great, and the shame of the Cross. But that would be only the appearance of things, not the heart. Around Him also would gather the loyalty of faithful disciples, and the love of women, and the praises of little children, and the gratitude of the poor, and the reverence of holy souls, and the awe of the wicked, and the sympathy of the saints in Paradise, and the service of the mighty angels of God. On Him also would rest, the true aureole for His head, the Spirit of God and the love of His Heavenly Father.

This fascinating and quickening contrast between the worldly weakness and spiritual might of Jesus' Nativity has also been a prophecy of the continual contradiction between the power and the appearance of His Religion. For how does the Faith of Jesus treat its disciple? It meets him at the beginning with the condition of repentance; it demands to the end the renunciation of self. It enjoins the surrender of his goods to be disposed of as the Master may command; it offers him a reward none

can see or handle. It requires him to gird himself with a towel and serve; it assures him of various sufferings and humiliations. It cannot be satisfied without the obedience of the intellect and the sacrifice of the heart: it feeds the one with mysteries and the other with crosses. Its weapon of aggression is preaching, and of defence, humility; its champions are martyrs, and its victories are holiness. Its crest and coat of arms are the Cross, and its symbolic rite the remembrance of the Master's crucifixion. Yet this faith has laughed to scorn the sword and the stake; has broken to pieces strong tyrannies and the kingdoms of unrighteousness; has raised its throne on the ruins of ancient theologies and philosophies; has changed persecutors into missionaries, and served itself heir to the empire which put its Founder to death; has made free men out of slaves, and saints out of profligates, and nations out of savages; has created peace and civilisation; has given the revelation of God, and opened the sure vision of the life to come. What weakness! what omnipotence! And the sign thereof is the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.

When the disciples of the Master are dazzled by false lights, and are intoxicated with success, it is wholesome to take their way back through the centuries, studded with achievements of the Faith, to the obscure and lonely spring, and understand the single secret of Christian strength. For if one should suppose that it consists in the things which fill the eye and are matter of boasting, then he has missed the inwardness of the Nativity, and for him it would have seemed more fitting that Jesus should have been born in Pontius Pilate's palace, with the Roman Eagles over the room, and the chief priests of Jerusalem in attendance. The Religion of Jesus stands not in stately cathedrals, nor in magnificent services, nor in lordly ecclesiastics, nor in huge finances, nor in learned doctrines, since at the best these are only the witness to its age and vigour, not the life itself. Chris-

tianity is strong and fruitful in proportion to the number of men and women who are like Jesus: who are pure, and gentle, and patient, and faithful; who are bravely carrying their cross and serving their fellow-men, and making life sweeter, and striving after the best things. These are the saints, who neither pretend nor assume, who win and convert, without knowing it, to whom all are drawn as to the feet and lowly place of the Holy Child.

The Nativity of Jesus was an event with a date—which is not at all certain; it is also an influence which is perennial, and is daily working spiritual miracles. Nothing has ever done so much for purity as the poem of the Madonna and the Child. It must ever be right for morality to condemn the foul license of the flesh, and to pursue the unrepentant sinner with its penalties, but the policy of repression has never succeeded like the policy of replacement. Neither conscience nor commandments have made impurity so flagitious and loathsome, or lent to purity sanctions so august and lovely, as the Idyll of Bethlehem. In the most lawless ages, and in the foulest minds within the range of Christian thought, the Virgin has cast her shield over the defenceless and created a new reverence for womanhood. To sin against a woman is to insult the mother of Jesus, and to protect a woman is to serve her who was counted worthy of the angel's message. If one be haunted by unholy thoughts and beset by fiery temptations, he had better make his way to the place where a pure mother bends over the Divine Child and the sacred mysteries of womanhood and motherhood are glorified.

It is here also that one is delivered from the glamour and fascination of this present world, which is apt to catch even spiritual hearts in its tangling net. We walk too much by sight, and are much taken by gold and silver, by purple and fine linen, by pomp and palaces, and are not firmly convinced that those may be only the accessories of folly and tyranny, and that beauty of

THE FLIGHT

He took the young child and his mother by night, and departed.—Matthew, II. 14.

life lies in its simplicity and nobility. Beside the manger and the maiden of Nazareth, how poor and ashamed are Herod's blood-stained glory and the palace of a Roman procurator! They are not worthy to be mentioned save as a foil and contrast. What art has been inspired by Herod, though they called him Great? What traveller has sought for the place where Pilate lived? Herod is known now to the world because he had the will to slay Jesus; Pilate because he crucified Him. But the finest genius had laid its treasures, with the Wise Men, at the feet of this poorest of all children, and to the imagined site of the Nativity thousands of the religious come from the ends of the earth. So unreal is this world we see, so eternal the world of faith. And the Nativity remains the appreciation and reinforcement of love, the chief and most beneficent of all passions. With all of us there may be times when the baser passions seem to sway life and direct its issues; there may even be moments when it seems as if ambition, greed, envy, hatred, were omnipotent. The stoutest heart is ready now to fail; for if these be the lords of life, the end must be death. Then is it that one had better visit Bethlehem, and learn of a truth that beneath all the spume upon the surface of life the deepest current, which is ever running clear and strong, is love, the love of man for woman, of mother for child, of friend for friend, of God for us all, which love has been declared and enshrined at Bethlehem. Without love the king's palace is a prison; with love a stable is the vestibule of heaven. Without the light of love life is a hopeless mystery, with it life is an open secret; for as the ages pass we are coming to see that the way to all truth and the unity after which science and philosophy and faith seek are to be found in the Nativity of Jesus.

Chapter IV: The Home of Jesus

AS the traveller journeying by railway along the Riviera is tantalised by the glimpses of blue between the tunnels, so are we fired to desire a complete biography of the Master from Bethlehem to Calvary by the brief memorabilia of the Evangelists, and especially we should love to have a Gospel of the Childhood. What wise sayings must have fallen from His fresh lips; what beautiful actions He must have done; what gracious services He must have rendered! Would not the Child Christ have been as winsome and convincing as the Galilean Christ? And yet may it not be that we are at such times cherishing a false and sickly imagination of the young Christ, conceiving Him to be not only simple and stainless, but also self-conscious and artificial—a prodigy of power and wisdom? What if there were nothing to tell that would satisfy our curiosity?—nothing save the delicate blossom of goodness in the spring-time; nothing but the subtle suggestions of hidden Divinity, which none but His mother could appreciate? Would it not be profanity to picture Jesus as that monster of precocity—the good child of religious fiction? Are we not bound in reverence to believe that at every stage of life He would be utterly and perfectly natural. With the supreme

good taste of Holy Scripture it is simply written that the Child increased in stature and in wisdom, and in favour with God and man. Place this perfect epitome of a young life against the memoirs of modern heroes, with their painful absence of reserve or reticence; with their ardent exaggerations and unwholesome fancies, or beside the Apocryphal Gospels, with their wretched banalities and incredible nursery tales, and one is thankful for the silences and dignity of the Evangelists.

It is enough that Jesus lived His first thirty years at home in Nazareth, since home gathers into it the five factors which influence nature when it is plastic and give it a permanent shape. The first is that word which is of one blood with home, since none can think of home without at the same time saying mother. Without her there may be a house, there is not a home, and he who has not known her care will be a loser all his life. It is she who furnishes the dwelling-place with peace and beauty, who creates the atmosphere in which the sensitive nature of a child puts forth its green and tender leaf, in which youth is inspired with visions and nobility, to which manhood will ever return for sympathy and appreciation. In the Bible, which is the standard record of human life, the mother has prepared the servants of God from Moses to Samuel, from David to the Baptist, but among all women and mothers surely the most blessed is Mary. Christians may not all unite in paying almost Divine honours to the Virgin, or in believing that she is an intercessor with her Son, but surely in every reverent mind she must have a solitary place who brought Jesus into this world, and discharged to His infancy the tender offices of motherhood, whom, as His mother, He cared for in the cottage of Nazareth, and whom He committed on the cross to His friend. And no one can read St. Luke's Gospel without recognising in the mother of Jesus the very ideal of womanhood.

Many qualities go to that image of the Perfect Woman which every man carries in his heart and first associates with his mother, which he protects from the stain of every evil thought, and which is daily alluring him to holiness. Beauty is hers in the nature of things, for one does not think of form and colour, but of the soul, which maketh heaven of the face; and it is not merely the unbroken tradition of the Church, nor the fame of the women of Nazareth, but a sense of fitness as we read her life, which represents the Virgin with a face of meek and holy loveliness, as becometh the handmaid of the Lord. The face of the Madonna was the first thing of earth the Infant saw when He opened His eyes in the manger, and through His boyhood its spiritual grace would be as a bit of that heaven from which He came. Whether a mother be brilliant or clever is of little account; but it is of great price that her mind be noble and sensitive to the Highest — that she be visited by those profound thoughts which have their home in the unseen, and be inspired by unworldly enthusiasms. Mary was only a village maiden, but the Spirit of God bloweth where It listeth, and to her we owe one of the most majestic hymns of the Church Catholic. It mattered nothing that she was not learned after the fashion of the scribes, she had seen the angel who stands in the presence of God; it was less than nothing that she lived in a house of two rooms, since it opened into Eternity. For her Divine motherhood Mary was prepared twice — once because she had so little of the world which is seen, once because she had so much of the world which is not seen. Upon a mother is laid a charge beside which nothing in the world can be compared — the fostering of the soul. If she teach her son to have regard to himself, to make friends with the children of unrighteousness, to satisfy himself with ignoble ease, to covet material treasures, then has she betrayed her trust and sold her son as with a kiss. If she train her son to set the eternal above all things of sense,

to count service the high duty of life, to welcome hardship as one meets his bride, to fear none and nothing save God—then shall that son be twice born of his mother—once of her body, and once of her soul; and her son may be cast out of synagogues and palaces, and may die poor and rejected, but her name shall be written in the story of the ages as the mother of a hero and a saint.

After his mother the next most potent influence in a lad's life is knowledge, which is gathered from wise men, from books, and from places of learning. Nazareth was a village too simple and rough to have many instructors, but it were not just to forget Joseph, to whose calm judgment and proved charity, to whose discretion and faithfulness, the young child must have owed many lessons of practical life, and that sense of protection which, with Mary's faith, secured quietness of life. Before the consciousness of the Divine Sonship had become clear in Jesus' soul He had learned the excellence of earthly fatherhood, and in the fond accent with which Jesus pronounces father there is a silent testimony to the character and offices of Joseph. One judges a lad unfortunate in our time who has been born into a house where there is everything except books, and would consider him happy who may live in a small house if it be rich in books, for each one will be a kingdom. For Jesus there could be only one book, but it was the best—the Law and the Prophets. Certain portions of Deuteronomy would be kept by the door, and read constantly, wherein it is commanded that the Law of the Lord should be taught unto the children in rising up and sitting down, in sitting in the house and walking by the way. Whether that humble household had any other portion of the Divine Law in written form is doubtful, so that what the poorest child may have to-day was most likely denied to the Master—the possession of a Bible. There would be by this time—as we infer from a law of Jesus the son of Gamaliel, the high priest about

A.D. 64 — a school in such a village as Nazareth, where the young boys would be educated by a teacher, and the education would be in the Scriptures. Here day by day Jesus would commit to memory portions of the Old Testament, and so He gathered that treasure of Holy Scripture whence He drew arguments, defences, promises, guidance in the days of His ministry. As we know, He had learned Aramaic, the dialect of Syria; as we are nearly certain, He understood Hebrew, which is to Aramaic what Latin is to Italian; as we take for granted, Jesus also spoke Greek, being an inhabitant of Galilee of the Gentiles; and, as is possible, He may have known something of Latin, the language of government, the Master was not without the culture of varied speech, although He never had the dubious privilege of attending the schools of the rabbis in Jerusalem, and was happily free from the cultus of Jewish theology.

Besides Joseph and His mother, Jesus had to do with certain who were called His brethren, and for a time may have lived in the house with Him. Certain have held that these men were His full brethren, that is, the sons of Joseph and Mary; but against this it must be urged that the whole bearing of these brethren is that not of younger but of older men; that if they had been the sons of the Virgin, Jesus would have committed her to their charge before His death, and also that after the birth of Jesus, to suppose that Mary was the mother of children by Joseph is to many minds incredible and profane. If they were the half-brethren of Jesus, and the sons of some less spiritual mother than Mary, one can understand their unbelief in this younger brother with his unworldly ideals and Divine aspirations. One can also understand that Jesus must have suffered in the home during His early years through their misunstanding and criticism, and that He was, in some measure, prepared by this discipline for the gauntlet of Pharisaic fault-finding and slander. It must have been one of the veriest trials and

reproaches of Jesus, that while He made such unreserved and confident claims upon His followers, they of His own household did not believe in Him; and this is another illustration of the pathetic fact that those who are nearest are often blindest to goodness and cannot see what is plain to all the world.

Among the factors which went to form the character of the Master one must not forget or belittle labour, since for at least fifteen years Jesus followed the trade of Joseph and wrought as a carpenter. One imagines Him fashioning the wood with much the same tools which are used in Nazareth this day, taking care that the last touch of perfection be not wanting, and casting away the labour of a day if it were faulty, carrying His finished work to some rich man's house, asking for His wage that He might relieve His mother's care, and leaving without it to come back some other day. So the Master of us all has set the wholesome example of labour to all His disciples; so He has made Himself one unto all generations with them who toil and sweat; so He has dignified and sanctified honest work of every kind—from that of the hand-labourer to that of the poet. As He struggled with intractable material and accomplished perfect shapes with poor rough tools, the Master was learning already that patience and hopefulness, that skill in handling knotty and unpromising human material, whereby He was to change sinners into saints and Galilean peasants into apostles. For he who has never had to do with anything save books and ideas is apt to be repelled and daunted by stupidity, but he who has wrought in wood can see the carved tabernacle hidden within the gnarled trunk. They counted it a loss in His day that Jesus had not studied in the schools of the rabbis at Jerusalem; we are thankful that instead He worked with His hands at Nazareth, and that for His Apostles He chose men whose nerves were calm and strong, whose minds were habituated to the slow, persevering methods of toil.

JESUS LABORING AT HOME WITH JOSEPH AND MARY

And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them.—Luke, II. 51.

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It was also, as we discover from His after-speech, a pure joy and a means of education to the Master that He spent His youth in a highland village. Two men do not begin life on equal terms if one has had his first sight of life in a squalid street of a crowded city, and another has spent his childhood on a green hillside. One expects the less from the dock labourer earning his bread hardly by a polluted river, one expects the more from a shepherd who all day long follows his sheep through lovely solitudes. Nazareth itself lies in a valley, but Jesus had only to climb the hillside, and the Holy Land and the very history of Israel was spread out before Him. Beneath, as one looks southwards, was the plain of Esdraelon, the site of many battles and glorious deeds, and the mountains of Samaria. To the east Tabor rises from the plain, richly wooded and perfect in its symmetry, whence Barak descended upon Sisera with ten thousand after him, and where the rabbis thought the Temple ought to have been built. Carmel, where Elijah beat back the forces of paganism, stood out from the shore of the sea, which was another name for the West, and whose shores were to see the triumphs of Jesus' Evangel. Northwards were the hills round the sea of Galilee, and distant Hermon, which was ever capped with snow, and made the boundary of the Holy Land.

As the Master wandered round the ridge of the cup in which Nazareth lay, with open ear and understanding eye, He gathered that harvest of imagery with which He afterwards delighted and instructed His disciples. There He saw the sun rise in greyness over the valley of the Jordan, and go down in red upon the waters of the great sea; the mountain torrent sweeping away the house built on the sand, and the leaves tossed to and fro as the wind blew where it listed; the sower going forth to sow on his four kinds of soil, and the husbandman pruning the vine that it might bring forth more fruit; the mountain flowers fairer than Solomon in all his glory, and the birds for whom

His Heavenly Father cared; the fox creeping home to its lair, and the vultures gathering to their prey. From amongst the hills where the air was clear and sweet, from the simple home where Mary made an atmosphere of quiet, from the study of God's word, and from long meditations in the evening and morning hours, Jesus came forth at the Divine call to declare the Father whose voice He had heard in a secret place, and to establish the Kingdom which the Prophets had imagined

Chapter V: The Call of the Messiah

THE consciousness of Jesus is a supreme mystery, and in the end one has simply to accept the facts and speculate with much modesty and diffidence about their theory, because when Jesus says "I" the word compasses the poles of Divinity and humanity. If it be "Before Abraham was, I am," or "Father, glorify Thou Me with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was," or "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life," then this is an Eternal Person and not one of this age Who is speaking, and Jesus did speak after this fashion. If it be "Get thee behind Me, Satan, for it is written, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord Thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve,' " or "Nevertheless I must walk to-day, and to-morrow, and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem," or "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" then this is one of ourselves Who speaks: a Man of like struggles, sorrows, passions, and limitations. The "I" of Jesus means sometimes Very God of Very God, and sometimes Very Man of Very Man, and yet there is but one Person Who is not embarrassed by opposite experiences, not inconsistent with Himself—Who is ever Jesus.

Many questions rise to one's mind regarding this relation of the

Divine and Human in our Master, and haunt the pious mind with a persistent fascination; but they belong to theology rather than biography. One, however, is most practical, and is fairly met in the Gospel history. When Jesus leaves His home at Nazareth, and appears before the people on the Jordan, He is conscious of His high calling as the Messiah, and this conviction deepened as He moved forward to the Cross. It was an amazing claim for any man to make; the more amazing for one who was neither a priest nor a scribe, but a humble and unlearned person. Was this a sudden revelation which had been given Jesus, or had it been an inborn conviction of His mind since first He knew anything? Was there any moment when the latent consciousness of His Messiahship awoke in Him, and He said unto Himself, "I am the servant of the Lord spoken of in ancient prophecy?" This is a reverent and reasonable question, and it is answered in the Gospels; for if the veil be only once lifted from Jesus' early years, it is to show us His Divine vocation.

While the call of God is ever incalculable and secret, like the mystery of the winds, yet there is also a certain setting of circumstances, and the first in Jesus' case was His age. One period is not the same as another in the development of human life, but certain are critical and dominant, dwarfing the years before, and swallowing up those to come. The most influential cannot be exactly fixed, since it comes sooner to some and later to others; but when it does arrive, neither can it be mistaken. Come this year when it may, at twelve or sixteen, it closes the door on childhood and opens it on manhood. It is that narrow space on the crest of the hill, which opens a new prospect hitherto unimagined, and sends the streams of thought and energy in another direction. When a lad begins to understand life and himself; to consider what has to be done in the world, and to calculate his share in the work; to hear voices calling from the open, and to catch the Divine echo in his soul,—he changes

before our eyes, as when the sap stirs in the trees at springtime. He is suddenly dissatisfied with his surroundings; vague dreams of the future possess him; his very eyes have a distant look. For him old things are passing away, and all things will soon be new. It was at the age of twelve that Jesus became a man, and then it was that the slumbering instinct of the Eternal awoke in Jesus, and He realised Himself.

Another influence which tells on a youthful soul in the day of its second birth is History. Through his boyhood the lad has lived in some secluded valley where the familiar hills make a horizon, as in Nazareth, and the petty affairs of the village are life, with only an occasional view of the land in its length and breadth, and a faint echo of the larger life. The little commune is to him the commonwealth, and its heads his heroes. One day he climbs the imprisoning hills and passes out into the great world, where he finds himself one in the procession of his nation, and the past, studded with mighty deeds, bends over him. He awakes to the fact that he is part of a people, with its own character, its own traditions, its own mission; he realises that its glory is his heritage, its sins his burden, its service his charge. If by his nationality he be separated from other peoples, he is linked the closer to his own, at whose name his heart burns, at whose history his mind awakes. It was a Jewish custom of wisdom and felicity that in the year of emancipation a lad should go up to keep the feast at Jerusalem; for wheresoever he started, a journey through that land of sacred memories would be an education, and his coming to the capital an inspiration. Between Nazareth and Jerusalem, Jesus, with Joseph and Mary, would pass through the fertile and lovely plains of Esdraelon, brilliant with flowers; and Shunem would recall Elisha, who in his gentleness and tolerance followed Elijah, as Jesus followed the Baptist; and He would see Gibeah, the birthplace of the first king of Israel, and very likely rest by the well of

Jacob, whose spiritual intensity gave a new name to his people. Prophets, kings, and patriarchs would arise and accompany Him on His way, and the purpose of Jewish history, growing from age to age, would become luminous. As the little company sung the Psalms of degrees, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the House of the Lord," or "If it had not been the Lord Who was on our side, now may Israel say," or "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion," the inextinguishable hope of the poets of Israel would take distinct shape in Jesus' mind. And when at last the great city burst upon His view, beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, and the immense Temple, its massy white and gold glistening in the sunshine—the symbol and centre of Jewish religion, then the veil, which had been for years growing transparent, would fade away and disappear from before Jesus' eyes; and He would come to the spiritual realities behind the figures and prophecies of His people's history.

And in the awakening of youth perhaps the chief factor is a master, and herein we have one of the supreme illustrations of personal and intellectual influence. Within some class-room, out of sight and knowledge of the multitude, a teacher speaks to a handful of young men concerning the principles which lie behind life. He challenges their intellectual curiosity: he fans their smouldering imagination into flame; he shows them the door into treasure-houses of knowledge. By-and-by they will have left him and gone throughout the land and among the people; they will fire the enthusiasm of thousands and move them to righteousness: they will change the face of life and open new chapters of human progress: and they will ascribe their first inspiration to that master. It was not what he had taught them nor that they had always agreed with him: it was that he made them think, and led the way. Within a restricted measure this service was rendered to Jesus by the doctors of the Temple when He

was at the feast. The feasts were not merely a round of religious ceremonies: they were also a convention for religious discussion. What time the people did not give to Temple duties they devoted to theology; and although many of the questions may have been very trivial and the scholars very pedantic, yet some of the former went to the heart of things, and some of the latter were able and learned persons. During the day the doctors sat in council administering the law as the supreme tribunal of the nation, and then in the evening they met any who chose to come in an outer court of the Temple and desired to learn. Just as to-day in the Mosque of Al-Azhar, at Cairo, masters of repute sit on the floor surrounded by their pupils and an outer group of casual hearers, so the Jewish rabbis held their class for all and sundry, counting it good to create the thirst for knowledge. It was a democracy of learning and an open school for the people. With a mysterious future opening before Him and the sound of the Divine Voice in His soul, Jesus found this fountain of knowledge, and was so fascinated that He forgot everything else and allowed His parents to start without Him. It was not till evening that they found that He was not anywhere in the company, which straggled in groups on the homeward way; and when they returned to Jerusalem, it was to see a strange sight. Their son, whose quietness and lowliness were the delight of His parents and the example of Nazareth, was standing in the presence of the chief doctors. Round the old men and the youth a crowd had gathered, and as Mary came near she heard Jesus' voice. He was asking questions and giving answers to questions with such insight and wisdom that the rabbis were astonished. No one can read the account without keen sympathy, and no one can refuse his imagination some liberty. Who were these favoured men to whom the honour came of satisfying the awakening mind of Jesus, and what was the subject of their conversation? Was old Hillel still living, of whom the proselyte said,

"Gentle Hillel, let all blessings fall upon thy head, that thou hast brought me under the wings of the Divine glory"; and whose counsel was, "Be thou of Aaron's disciples, loving peace and seeking for peace, loving the creatures and attracting them to the law!" It is pleasant to think that this kindest and wisest of all Jewish rabbis, of whose gracious sayings some have found an echo in Jesus' words, had laid his hand on the Master's head and blessed Him—another Simeon receiving the wisdom of God into his heart. Was Shammai, the head of the harder school and Hillel's opponent, in the Temple that day, and did his sternness relax before the sweetness and light of the young Christ? It is almost certain that Gamaliel, so cool and judicious in intellect, and Nicodemus, so fair and candid, would be present and have their part. Did any of the younger men remember the incident twenty years afterwards, when, in that very Temple, Jesus defended Himself and His doctrine against all parties? or when He stood before the council and was condemned as a blasphemer? Did Gamaliel then identify the dangerous heretic with the brilliant lad who had so excited and delighted the doctors of the law? It is not likely, for that was but an incident, and many things had happened since. Are we to suppose that Jesus received clear light and guidance in His Messianic career from the rabbis, or that their theology left any trace on His thinking? It is hardly necessary to answer this question: one of Jesus' chief faults in Jerusalem was His independence of rabbinism. Yet it remains a fact of much interest that the awakening of Jesus' intellectual life is to be dated, not in Nazareth, among the simple village folk, but among the rabbis in the Temple. So full of service and stimulus is learning, even in its most bigoted and arid forms.

It is with a keen sense of disappointment that one reads Mary's remonstrance with Jesus, wherein she seemed to have no pride in that understanding which filled the Temple circle with aston-

ishment, but rather complained of the anxiety which He had caused His parents. No doubt her very complaint was an indirect testimony to the obedience and thoughtfulness of Jesus' home life, Who until that day had given them no care. No doubt it also bore witness of their utter devotion to the Holy Child. And yet ought not the Virgin at least, who had been so favoured of Heaven, to have expected such revelations of Jesus' power, as when the sun shineth from behind the clouds, and to have rejoiced therein with reverence, as one who had received another visit of the Angel? When Mary broke in on that amazing debate, and inflicted on Jesus the humiliation of her interference, she fell somewhat below her high estate, but she was still true mother. It is not at once that the most understanding and spiritual of mothers recognises that the Divine Spirit is nearest to her Son's soul, and that to Him also comes His vocation. It is not without many misgivings and heart-pangs that she surrenders her Son and sees Him go His own way. Again and again she will repent herself and desire to save Him from His own zeal. For we are all blind and slow of heart to understand that the Divine vocation is paramount and irresistible for child or friend, and that none can meddle between the soul and God without risk of defeat and disaster.

Jesus' answer to His mother's reproof and His submission—His first recorded action—are both altogether worthy, and struck the keynote of that life which was to move before God and man like a perfect symphony. With astonishment full of respect and affection, He appealed to His mother whether she could not understand His desire to learn the purposes of God, and His necessity to fulfil His Father's will: "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" What a sudden and convincing light does Jesus' reply cast on the private conferences of Mary and her Child! How this woman must have spoken of God, and of the religious life, and of the inward call,

and the loyalty of the soul, when Jesus was amazed that she did not see her teaching fulfilled that day, and said, "Wist ye not?" So it comes to pass that one may sow and not know the flower, but yet it was good to have sown, and the sower has the harvest.

With perfect fitness Jesus might have asked to remain in Jerusalem, and to sit at the rabbis' feet. We had been apt to say that this would have been His best preparation for the office of prophet, but we would have been short-sighted. For some —a Saul, if you please—this might have been best; for Him the atmosphere and studies of Jerusalem would have been a hindrance, stifling and contracting His soul. For Him it was best that He should be secluded in Nazareth, and live after a simple, humble fashion till all things were ready for His work. Between the Messiah-consciousness now growing within Him, and the duty of respect to His earthly parents there could be no conflict in Jesus' soul or life, because His growth was orderly and harmonious. For youth there may be many inspirations which shall be the strength of after years; but the first discipline is obedience, and only he who has learned to wait and submit shall be able to achieve. The will of God in a human life is no shallow stream which loses itself in marshes and vagrant channels, but it runneth deep and strong between the banks of Divine Providence. Jesus heard the voice of God in the Temple, and He went down to Nazareth, and was subject to His parents.

Chapter VI: The Forerunner

IT were true to say that Jesus appeared without expectation, since none knew whence He would come; it were also true to say that He came with expectation, since a nation waited for Him. None could have guessed His birth—the child of a village maiden, or His position—a workman of Nazareth, but every pious Jew was persuaded He would appear, and had seen His signs. For eight centuries heralds had been going before Him and making a pathway in the faith of the Hebrew Church. As often as their hearts sickened at the failure of human goodness, the Prophets beheld in the future the ideal figure of the Messiah; as often as they were reinforced by the spectacle of conspicuous virtue, they imagined its unrevealed perfection. When the heritage of God was spoiled and laid waste, they saw the Messiah gird His sword upon His thigh; and when the sun shone on Israel, it was the promise of the coming glory. From generation to generation the most spiritual and heroic patriots ever granted to a people fed the imagination of their brethren with the coming of a holy King and the establishment of a universal kingdom.

This noble succession seemed to cease, and the voice of the prophet was no longer heard in the land, but the Messianic hope

still lived in the national heart, and found new forms of expression. When some despaired of God's commonwealth, and others saw nothing for it but to die sword in hand, unknown writers hid themselves behind great names of the past—saints, prophets, sages—and poured out their souls, some in pessimistic satires, some in apocalyptic imaginations. The author of Ecclesiastes bewails the weariness of human life and the corruption of society with a bitterness of regret which is an unconscious cry for Christ, and the author of Daniel declares in a cryptogram the fall of foreign tyrannies and the victory of the Son of Man. A nation, beaten and crushed by overwhelming force, yet unconquerable in spirit and immovable in faith, had an inward conviction, begotten by the word of the Prophets and born of the hostility of circumstances, that the promise given to the fathers must be near fulfilment. The people began to look for the sudden redness in the east, and the forerunner of the dawn was John Baptist.

There is a sense in which the prophet is a recurring factor in history, appearing as often as the Eternal uncovers a man's ear and opens his mouth; there is a sense in which prophecy began and ended with the Hebrews, as a solitary gift of moral insight and in this way of it, and, excluding his Master, the last of the line was the Baptist. The spirit of prophecy, which for more than a century had been smouldering beneath the ashes of pedantry and formalism, blazed into flame before it went out and disappeared for ever. And the last of the Prophets was like unto the fire, and as it were, completed the circle of prophecy. Among all the order one Prophet specially held the Jewish imagination, not only because he led in order of time, but also because Elijah realised the elemental idea of a prophet, and it was the fond belief of the Jews that he who had opened the roll of Old Testament revelation would close it as he ran before the face of the Messiah. When Elias came again, the Messiah's

feet would already be on the threshold; and if this faith did not hold in the letter, it was fulfilled in the spirit, for in Baptist the mission of Elijah was revived, and prophecy ended as it had begun.

Since the day when the Tishbite rallied the faint heart of Israel, and beat down the power of Baal, the prophet had filled many parts, being in turn a statesman, an orator, a dramatist, a poet, and his necessary character is apt therefore to be forgotten. It was, however, inherent and unchangeable. He might be a leader in politics and a man of culture; or he might live apart and never write a word. Publicity and solitude are but the accessories of the office; the one thing essential is that he be in fellowship with God, and that he have received a message from God for his generation. God has spoken to him, and God's word is as a living fire in his bones. It is a burden upon his soul, and he is in an agony till he be delivered from its weight. Eloquent speech and literary technique, shrewd plans and brilliant deeds, may be added, but the core of the prophecy is the word of the Lord which this man has not composed, which at the peril of his soul he must declare.

Were one to adopt a scientific definition of a miracle, and say it is "an avenue into the unseen," then surely the most amazing miracle is not fire coming down from heaven or death changing into life, but one of those lonely prophets who now and again visit this earth. The generation from which he sprang dies and is buried; the great dynasty under which he lived comes to an end; the cities where he preached are laid in ruins; the very face of the country through which he roamed is changed. But this solitary man, without riches, or rank, or popularity, or learning, or any other external advantage, defies the teeth of time, and achieves a radiant immortality. His own generation fears him, hates him, resists him, persecutes him, puts him to death; but it yields to him, and does him homage, from the

king to the mob, and he moulds it for the time like clay. But that is only his inauguration, his ascension to the throne. Generation after generation receives him, responds to him, and owns his sway. What the poet says of common men is true: —

> "*Still glides the stream, and shall not cease to glide,*
> *While we the brave, the mighty, and the wise —*
> *We men must vanish.*"

There is one exception: the prophet does not vanish. His personality becomes a factor in history: his message a perpetual dynamic. As a corn of wheat he is flung into the ground, and springs up age after age. Baptist or another, he is Elias which was to come.

John Baptist was a commanding personality, who could not be ignored in his own day or any other, for he was distinguished from other men first of all by his calling. As the poet differs from other men of letters because, while they may have ability and culture, he has the fire which cometh from Heaven, so the prophet is raised above other teachers of religion because, while they may have knowledge and devotion, he has the Divine breath. Both the poet and the prophet move in the same region of emotion and vision, although the prophet be on the higher level, since he is commissioned and sent forth directly by the Eternal. It is possible to make an ordinary minister of religion, who shall do honest and useful work for his generation. You have but to choose a lad of good instincts, and give a certain trend to his mind, and hold up before him the nobility of this service, and train him by calculated means. No voice of man can call a prophet, no machinery can make him fit. The Spirit of God descends upon and sets him apart; a prophet he must be now, and, in spite of all hindrances, a prophet he will be. He is himself helpless in this matter, and his fellow-men are also helpless. A prophet is an unanswerable evidence of the sovereignty of

God, and this is the meaning of the story of John. He was promised unto his parents when they had despaired of children, and his father was stricken dumb because he believed not the word. He was named according to the angelic intimation, and the mouth of Zacharias was opened that he might call him John. Before he was born he did homage to his mighty Kinsman, before Whose face he was to run. Signs and wonders attended the child, and marked him off from the herd of men as one on whom the hand of the Eternal was surely resting. His father was one of the lower order of priests, and John was born into a quiet, conventional home; his birth provided for his future, and he could have served in his turn at the Temple. But there is no caging an eagle or compelling him into ordinary ways, and while still a lad, John forsook his father's house and hid himself in the wilderness of Judea. There was in him an instinct of his vocation, which made a common-place environment impossible for him, which drove him forth into a wider sphere. So early did this prophet hear the Divine voice, so early was he separated from his fellows. When art represents the Baptist, a man old before his time, austere, careworn, wasted, as in the fresco of Angelico, the figure is true and commanding; when he stands out a lad in the freshness of youth, strong, fresh, enthusiastic, as in the John Baptist of Del Sarto, one has the necessary complement of the other picture.

The Baptist was also the subject of a complete prophetical training, for when he came forth and witnessed unto his generation, he was the result of three forces, and the first was asceticism. It is not needful that every servant of God should be an ascetic, and for some work this discipline would be a hindrance; but in every age some are called to the last sacrifices. For the brief, awful ministry of the Baptist, the breaking up of the iron soil, he only was sufficient who had been cut off from all human ties, and had denied himself all lawful ease. Clad in the coarsest

of garments, eating the meanest of food, devoted to poverty and chastity, this man was a figure and sign of religious intensity. Behind the camels' hair and the locusts' food, and the wasted face, and the strong, fierce words, was one unquenchable desire —to obtain the Kingdom of God for himself and his nation. For this end he refused the priesthood, and abandoned his home and lived as a hermit, and preached repentance in the wilderness of Judea, and watched for the Messiah as they who watch for the morning. Beyond all question the Baptist was a violent man, who did violence to his generation, to his friends, to himself; but he was not therefore a madman or fanatic. His was an inspired and calculated violence. It was the planned assault by which an army storms a treasure city; it was the stroke of force in which a human soul gathers itself together and strikes for eternal life. The Baptist remains the outstanding type of that spiritual violence, whose goal and crown are the Kingdom of Heaven.

John was also formed by solitude, and could not have been the prophet we know nor have shaken Jerusalem with terror had he spent his early days amid the gossip of the village and the little affairs of his home. His ear must be trained to catch the first sound of Jesus' feet, and the Babel of earth's mixed noises must be hushed into stillness. Amid the coming and going of priests at their empty ritual, and the gabble of Pharisees at their theology, he should have been deaf to the highest things. His heart must be cleansed from the likeness of other faces, however dear and good, that from its clear, unpossessed surface the countenance of the Messiah might one day look at him. His mind must be emptied of present-day religion and earthly politics, that it be ready for the possession of the Messiah. While the city folk, living amid noise and news, are apt to be shallow and excited, they who live apart from the haunts of men, and see God's mighty works, occupy themselves with great mysteries. By an instinct of his

THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING

The voice of one crying in the wilderness.—Luke, III. 4.

office, John chose his solitude in the wilderness of Judea, whose awful desolation of barren hills and waterless valleys stretches along the valley of the Dead Sea, and thrusts itself to within a few miles of Jerusalem. Here John saw the bleached white stones out of which God could raise up children unto Abraham in place of a wicked generation, and the vipers escaping from the burning bushes to which he compared the Pharisees. This unprofitable and unlovely waste, where none but wild beasts and reptiles made their home, was to the vision of the Baptist a too faithful picture of his generation, which had lost all greenness of faith, and harboured in its bosom all manner of secret, treacherous sins.

His library in his retreat was chiefly to be found within his own soul and in the picture of that forsaken desert, but he was not without his teacher of the ancient time. If he was to be the real Elijah in his coming and office, he was to be the echo of the two Isaiahs in his thought and preaching. As the former took up the Lord's controversy against His people and rated Jerusalem soundly for her hollow ritualism and elaborate hypocrisy, which made "many prayers," with her hands "full of blood," so the Baptist laid his indictment against his generation for their vain show of religion and their hardness of heart. From that heroic witness of the eighth century John learned his self-abnegation, his single-heartedness, his spiritual patriotism, and his unshaken courage. From the second Isaiah, the most evangelical of the whole succession, John received a more gracious and yet more effective message, for it is evident that John knew not only the beginning of the book of Isaiah, but also its fifty-third chapter. After a day of sad reflection on the ungodliness of his people and of righteous indignation, he would sit down, and in the fading light, when the fierce glare of the day was over, content himself with the thought of the Servant of God on whom the Lord would lay the iniquities of Israel.

and who would be led as a lamb to the slaughter. As he meditated with softening heart on the Holy Victim and the Lord's mercy, then the bare and stony land would change before his eyes, and, behold, green grass and fountains of water, and the promise regarding the Kingdom of God was fulfilled: "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the rose."

It was good that the Baptist should live in the fearful and lonely desert that he might thunder repentance in the ears of the passing caravans, till a nation came to hear and trembled. For a prophet's first duty is to bring the men in his charge face to face with reality, and to hold them there till they do righteousness. People are apt in all ages to speculate about religion, and to take their own ideas for truth; to invent all kinds of rites, and to forget that these are but poor machinery at the best; to fall into a multitude of customs which are in their spirit selfish and sinful; to call themselves by flattering names, while they are dead. It is for the prophet to break up these refuges of lies, and to pull down every painted screen, and to leave the man naked that he may settle his account with God. It can never be right to think what is not true, never right to do what is wrong, never wise to rely on anything save truth and righteousness. What are you believing, what are you doing, not before man, but before God? is the prophet's continued question. He must arouse and alarm and harass till human beings abandon all shams and make-believes, and conventions, and forms. He stands, not before this world, which is in his eyes but a vain show: he stands before the Eternal, and recalls men to the sense of God.

While the world lasts there will be room for this Elias-work, but it is only temporary and elementary; Elias prepares for Him who is to follow. Elijah did bravely according to his light when he put to death the priests of Baal, for the Baal-worship was a foul, base thing; but Isaiah struck a nobler note in his

conception of the suffering Messiah. John Baptist wrought a great work when he told the scribes and Pharisees that the axe was at the root of their tree, and that the fruitless trees would certainly be burned; when he warned the publicans against dishonesty and the soldiers against violence, and commanded charity for all men—but this was only the preface to his message. He summoned to repentance, because only penitents would have a right to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, and the Kingdom was at hand. He baptised with water in sign that He was coming, Who would baptise them with the Holy Ghost and with fire. As the Baptist preached, his eyes sought among the people for Him, the latchet of Whose shoes he counted himself not worthy to loose; and John had fulfilled his ministry when he said to spiritual and penitent men, "Behold the Lamb of God, Who is taking away the sin of the world."

Chapter VII: The Baptism

THE meeting of Jesus and John, and the recognition of the Messiah by His forerunner, is one of the picturesque situations in the Gospel history, and it is perfect in its spontaneity. As the Baptist brooded in the wilderness over the prophecies of the ancient time, and as he declared unto the multitude with strong conviction that the "kingdom of God" was at hand, the one passion of his life rose to white heat, and his eager heart was eaten up with expectation. The atmosphere of the age was charged with the sense of the Messiah, and the lonely prophet strained his ears to catch the first sound of His feet. Any day, and, for that matter, any hour, the romance of faith might culminate, and the Hope of Israel appear. Every morning the hermit would rise and leave his home hewn out of the rock, which tradition gives him for a dwelling-place, to wait for the breaking of the day, since the rising of the sun might be the shining of His face, and he would lie down with sad reluctance, and hardly dare to sleep lest the darkness be the shadow of his Lord. Was the Christ already in the land, hidden and unknown, or would He come from afar with sudden glory? Would He show Himself by infallible signs, so that all men

should be compelled to own Him, or would He appear secretly, putting all men to the test by His presence, and already, before He was recognised, doing the part of a husbandman, with His fan separating the wheat from the chaff? It is certain that the Baptist had been saved from one vain delusion by his study of Isaiah: he did not expect the imperial Messiah of the gross Jewish imagination, but as little was he prepared to recognise his Lord, before Whom he had run, and Whose voice he had been, among the crowd who heard his message of repentance and submitted to the sacrament of penitence. Yet it was in these circumstances that the Baptist one day identified Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ, and knew that his work had not been in vain.

It may be suggested, with some reason, that John had surely known for years the birth and calling of Jesus, and ought not to have waited as in a mystery. Was he not the kinsman of Jesus, and had not a tender confidence passed between Elizabeth his mother and Mary the mother of Jesus? When John separated himself from his home and his people, and gave himself in his youth to be the herald of the Messiah, and Jesus declared to His mother that He had come to do the work of His Father in Heaven, would not other confidences pass between the holy women, and Elizabeth rejoice that as she had done homage to Mary her son was preparing the way for Jesus? As we weave this romance of the Holy Family, we set it in the light of afterwards, and forget how the most sacred and vivid spiritual experiences fade and lose their meaning even with saintly souls, so that Jesus once gently chided His mother because she forgot the mystery of His annunciation and nativity, saying, "Wist ye not?" And John had evidently learned nothing of his august Kinsman from Elizabeth, for he once declared unto the Pharisees, "I knew Him not." With even these intense and holy persons, rare and exalted experiences remained only

a faint, fragrant memory, which might be quickened into life, but meanwhile carried no practical influence.

The Baptist had never, so far as we know, seen Jesus before, and it was a gain, and not a loss, that he did not know the Messiah after the flesh, for in that moment of revelation he recognised Him, with the vision of the soul, after the spirit. When John was arrested by the visible holiness of Jesus, and identified Him as the Christ on Whose head rested the mystical Dove, and afterwards declared boldly that He was the Lamb of God, he proved at once his own fine spiritual perception and the inherent glory of Jesus. As he lived alone in the wilderness and studied the outlines of the Messiah's likeness in the mirror of Isaiah, it had grown real and living before his eyes, and the very face was printed on his soul. One day that which he had imagined flashed on him in all its spiritual loveliness, and the Baptist did the Messiah instant homage. It is related of St. Francis, and it is perhaps the most beautiful incident in the perfect life of the saint, that, seeing a pure white lamb in the midst of a flock of goats, he stood still and was much affected. "Behold," said he to his followers—for to St. Francis the outer world was ever a sacrament of the spiritual—"Jesus in the midst of sinners." It was after this fashion Jesus was identified as the Messiah—a portrait of perfect holiness framed in the blackness of those sinners of Jerusalem.

When the day of His discovering to Israel had fully come, just as in a lower world birds know the seasons of their coming and going, Jesus, moved by the infallible instinct of the Messiahship, left His home, where from childhood to manhood He had done the will of God in quietness. He took His way by the road which crosses the plain of Jezreel, and follows the mountains of Samaria and Judea, and comes at last to the place where John was baptising in the Jordan. It could not have been by chance that the prophet chose this font for the sacrament of

penitence, for it was sanctioned by ancient history, full of instruction and inspiration. Here, as the Catholic historian of the Master points out, the children of Israel crossed with Joshua into the promised land, and here Elijah, the pioneer of prophecy, smote the waters with his mantle. To-day the ford is called the "Place of Passage," and the western bank is green, and covered with willows and tamarisks. Whole flocks of wood-pigeons find here a home, so here are all the signs of the great affair of regeneration, the pure water, the passage from old things to new, and the gentle white dove, which is the symbol of the Holy Ghost.

It was most fitting, like everything else in Jesus' life, that where sinful men had gathered in contrition and were waiting for God's kingdom, the Anointed of God should appear; but when Jesus not only was a hearer of the new Gospel, but also desired to have the sinner's baptism, one is not astonished that the Baptist was staggered and shrank back with pious horror. Unto the Baptist, the Savonarola of his day, came the ignorant people, sordid and greedy through the struggle for life; the publicans swollen with the gains of oppression; the rough soldiers, who wrought their unchecked will on the helpless; the miserable women, who were the open ulcer of society; and even the Pharisees, shaken out of their pride for a space. A great wave of religious emotion had swept this mixed mass of evil-doers to the feet of the prophet and the laver of the Jordan. They were where they ought to be, where they could find salvation. Remorse and shame had sped them in anxiety and terror to confess their sins and seek the Divine mercy. What had brought Him Who was holy, harmless, and undefiled? Nothing less than the sacred waters of the Jordan could avail for this mass of rascaldom and hypocrisy, but what could any water do for Him or His whiteness? For the hands, themselves sinful, which plunged publicans and harlots into the flowing water, to touch the holi-

ness of Jesus was an impossible sacrilege, and the dismay of the Baptist was so manifest that Jesus could only ask him to suffer His desire.

When Jesus gave His reason to His servant and declared that His baptism would fulfil "all righteousness," it was in the very sound a striking utterance, but it is not quite clear on first sight what the Master intended. It is no explanation to read righteousness in a strictly legal sense, and to see in the baptism another illustration of the Master's respectful regard for the laws of His national religion, since this lustration of penitence was not an ancient regulation of Judaism, and had no binding force; it was a voluntary rite and not a universal commandment. Still less is it to be suggested that Jesus had any moral need for such a cleansing because He had sinned in thought or deed, for it was His whiteness against their blackness which moved the Baptist to his indignant refusal. Nor could the baptism of the Jordan be a ceremony introducing Jesus to His Messianic office, since the greater could not be blessed of the lesser, the servant instal his Lord. It was not indeed possible that Jesus could gain by this rite of humility, but it is possible that He could give; and as Jesus submits to the waters of the Jordan in the company of sinners, we see an act of utter self-surrender and a public acceptance of His calling. It was a deliberate emptying of Himself and the first step to the Cross.

What the Baptist saw by faith was a man spotless and separate amid the sin which blackened the land and now encompassed Him on every side. What he expected was that this holiness should be declared in the sight of all men by separation of life and aloofness from the sinners. He may have been delivered from the vain delusion of an imperial throne, but he must have imagined the holy throne high and lifted up of Isaiah's vision. He had received the conception of a suffering Messiah, but it would be the Lamb of God offered apart from the people on a sacred

altar. A Messiah rearing a throne with His own hands amid the waste of sin and on the foundation of sinners' hearts; a Messiah making His altar of the people's sufferings and Himself laid on it by the people's hands, was as yet beyond the Baptist, as it has often been beyond the Church of later ages. What Jesus desired was to forget His perfect purity and Divine dignity, which were their own evidence and protection, and to plunge into the very depths of ordinary sinning, sorrowful human life in His pity and sympathy, that He might lift the burden, which would be on His shoulders, but could be no part of Himself. According to the excusable idea of the Baptist, his Lord should have gathered His white garments around Him with fastidious care and stood alone on the bank, while at His feet the waters were stained with the sin of poor struggling humanity; but according to the heart of Jesus He must descend into the midst of the river till in the end what neither the water of the Jordan nor any other could do would be accomplished by His lifelong Passion and His death. This baptism was a sacrament of the Messianic love —a pledge of utter devotion to His fellow-men, a symbol of identification with humanity.

It might seem at the time a vain sacrifice, but now one can see that no act could more fitly open the mission of Jesus, and none could be a surer prophecy of its final success. He was not to take His way through pleasant circumstances and among good people, with reverence and admiration and honour and applause waiting on Him. He was to dine at publicans' tables, and live in their houses; to talk at well sides with disreputable women, and to have harlots following Him into respectable houses; to be classed with illiterate folk and despised provincials; to be cast out of the Church as a heretic, and to be counted a blasphemer. He was to be mixed up with the dregs of the people, and it was to be suggested that He was Himself no better than the worst. The waters of His baptism were ever to be on His

head, so that the Pharisees standing on their high bank could condemn Him, and the miserable below would claim Him. He would be condemned that He might save, and stooping He would conquer. Between the handful of righteous and the mass of sinners He cast in His lot with the sinner, so He lost the righteous, who needed no Saviour, and He found the sinners, who did. Baptised into shame and suffering that day by John's austere hands, our Master was also baptised unto power and glory, and the drops of Jordan water glistening in the sun were the jewels of an eternal crown.

Jesus' baptism, with its consequences, is a supreme illustration of the law, that he who would save his fellows must condescend to their estate. Just in so far as any one has preserved himself and maintained his distances has he lost his advantage and failed; in so far as one has forgotten himself and cast himself into the swift stream of agony, has he been strong and has saved. This is the initial test of service—searching and severe. From this painful and repulsive contact with the vile, the outcast, the ignorant, the coarse, every one shrinks in proportion to the fineness of his nature; but he who makes this last sacrifice of fellowship with the lost has his reward. This is the way of the Messiah, and Heaven bends over it with open approval. Jesus accepted His calling without reserve that day, and when He came up from the river the Spirit of God was resting on Him like unto a dove, and a voice from the Highest declared that He Who had stooped so low for mercy's sake was God's Beloved Son.

Chapter VIII: The Temptation

WHEN we read in the Gospels that after Jesus was baptised of John He was led into the wilderness to be tempted, the order of events is not merely temporal, it is also spiritual. If any one be moved to dedicate himself without reserve to the cause of God and the service of his fellow-men, it is an act of immense significance, and it must needs be followed by a retreat. It had not been fitting that as soon as Jesus had come up from the Jordan, with the water still on His head, He should begin to preach the Kingdom. He would have been without any plan of work and without possession of Himself for the Messianic enterprise. Before Jesus presented Himself to the people or called His first disciples, He must realise within His consciousness not only that He is the Hope of the Prophets, but also must determine the appointed lines of the Messiah's career, as One in Whom is stored unused and unknown resources. For forty days — a number of sacred tradition — Jesus secluded Himself in the wilderness, that His soul, being freed from the bondage of the body and the turmoil of life, might enter into the will of God.

No man can come through a spiritual crisis without physical reaction, and, according to the intensity of the soul will be the

exhaustion of the body. On such occasions it seems as if the blood had been drained through a wound, as if the nerves had been stretched unto the breaking. Never is the strongest soul more depressed, never does it lie more open to attack. And it was at the close of the forty days that Jesus, Who may have been lightly tried before in Nazareth, passed through His first great temptation. As the Kingdom of God, with its hopes and visions, had in those days been opened unto Him, and His eyes had seen its unclouded brightness, with its hosts of Angels, its redeemed souls, its victories of holiness, its morning song of joy, so now He must, with His human eyes, behold the kingdom of evil, hardly suspected as He lived with Mary in Nazareth, with its suggestions of evil, its hatred of goodness, its pitiful persecution of the soul, its hideous shapes of sin, its black despair. For the Son of Man must know good and evil, that being thoroughly prepared He may be the Saviour of His brethren.

It is a reasonable question whether the circumstances of the temptation were actual or figurative. Did the Evil One appear in bodily shape to Jesus? was Jesus actually placed on a pinnacle of the Temple? were kingdoms of the world shown to Him as in a magical mirror? Or did Jesus, in relating this experience to his friends afterwards, clothe spiritual events in physical dress, to convey by a picture what had happened in His soul? The essential truth of the narrative and the reality of the incident are the same either way, and each person will conceive it as best suits his own mind, but the spiritual interpretation has two advantages. For one thing, it is more reasonable; for there is no other instance of the Evil One appearing in visible shape, and it were surely less than becoming that Jesus should be at Satan's disposal, to be whirled from the wilderness to the Temple, from the Temple to the wilderness. Besides, just so far as one imagines the Temptation to be a drama without, and not within, the soul, he separates the trial of the Master from that of His brethren,

THE TEMPTATION

And he was there in the wilderness forty days tempted by Satan; and was with the wild beasts.—Mark I. 13.

and so far robs them of His sympathy and His victory. Whatever may have happened in the case of Jesus, during Whose public life there was a special conflict of spiritual powers, holy and evil, the battle, in our case, is within and unseen. While the world is carrying on its work around us, and no one is conscious of the crisis, our affections, reason, will, are assailed; and while the world laughs and goes on its ways, unconscious of the supreme tragedy of life, we are inwardly overcome and put to shame. Unfortunately for us, we do not always understand the meaning of the conflict ourselves, and we have not the power to describe it; but if we had the insight and the imagination, then we also should have our pinnacles of spiritual exaltation and our glimpses of this present world.

Another question is more vital, and that is the spiritual reality of Jesus' temptation. It is not whether He was perfectly good, — that every one will take for granted, — but whether His perfect goodness was of such a kind as to give Him immunity from the danger of temptation. Was He tempted like one of us in the sense that the suggestion of the Evil One made a genuine appeal to Him from the outside? — that He had the power of yielding or resisting, and that He conquered with real pain? Should one say No — no temptation could affect Jesus any more than a lighted match falling on ice — then he has paid a disastrous honour to the Master, for in one breath he has denied the true humanity of His nature and the actual veracity of His life. If Jesus did not sin, not because He would not, but because He could not, then the difference between His disciples and Himself is not superiority of the same nature — a supreme degree of sainthood — but genuine distinction in nature — the possession of a superhuman nature. Jesus is not then bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, as we had fondly imagined, but a Being of another order; and while in the daily duel between evil and one of us the rapier of Satan can pierce our heart and spill our life-

blood, in Jesus it passed harmlessly through the shadowy form of a ghost. It will also follow that these accounts of conflicts taken from His own lips, so vivid, so intense, so encouraging, are, after all, only descriptions of a sham fight, where the cartridges were blank, and the issues were arranged beforehand. If, however, we come to the life of Jesus without any preconceived ideas, or any doctrines to safeguard, and if we read the record in its natural and reasonable sense, then the Temptation throbs and glows with intense reality. Jesus overcame not because He was invulnerable, but because He was strong; and, therefore, there is no man or woman anywhere, sorely beset in the spiritual warfare, who has not in Him a Friend and Saviour.

Three times was Jesus attacked in this classical battle— each occasion through a different avenue—and the first approach was laid through the body. It does not follow that every sensible temptation must be sensual, and it goes without saying that the spiritual and beautiful nature of Jesus rendered Him impervious to certain temptations which would have appealed to other young men of Nazareth. If His senses were ever to betray Him, the Master must be deceived by a show of innocence and simply fall into an action with a tang of wrong in it so subtle as to seem like goodness. Forty days had this man, in the fulness of His strength, denied Himself ordinary food, and lived in a state of high spiritual tension, and now His body—the body not of an ascetic but of a strong workman—asserted itself, and He was an hungered. No appetite is more imperious than hunger, for from its stimulus has sprung the first energy of the race. None is more innocent, since to deny its satisfaction, in ordinary circumstances, were suicide. Round Jesus, as He came out from His spiritual trance and became conscious of physical things, lay the white stones of the desert, mocking Him by their colour and shape with the suggestion of the homely bread His mother

baked in Nazareth, and which He ate with honest zest at the close of a hard day's work. If indeed He were endowed with the power of God, so that whatsoever He pleased He could do, and whatsoever He desired He could have, why should He not change the unprofitable stones into loaves of bread, as the Baptist declared God could make them into sons of Abraham, and eat and go on to His work in the strength thereof? It was the most reasonable and practical of temptations. The days were near at hand when Jesus would use His Divine power to feed a hungry multitude, to heal the loathsome disease of leprosy, to raise a man three days dead. Why not to revive His own strength? Because in this case He would have used His power to relieve Himself from one of the conditions of human life, and to secure His own ease, and because, had He made this concession to Himself, why should He not afterwards have employed the same power to clothe Himself in purple and fine linen? to escape the weariness of a poor man's travel? to shield Himself from the cruelties of His enemies? After all, as Jesus answered, the chief good of life is not meat — to satisfy oneself, but the words which come from the mouth of God — to fulfill spiritual ends; not to live for the senses, but for the soul. When it was insinuated into Jesus' mind that He might turn stones into bread for His own service, it was a veiled seduction of selfishness; and when the Master spurned it, He gave a pledge of sacrifice which anticipated the Cross and the day when the priests, who gave the stones unto the people and seized the bread for themselves, should mock Him, saying, "He saved others: Himself He cannot save."

Jesus' next temptation shifted the field from the body to the soul, and had a fair show of religion, as the last had of reason. Is not the very heart of religion faith in God, a faith so unreserved and unquestioning that it will leave the person absolutely in the hands of God? Ought not such faith to vindicate

itself sometimes, and put God to the test by some daring act of confidence? Suppose that Jesus should cast Himself from the highest point of the Father's House in face of all the people, and allow God to bear Him up on angels' wings,—would not this be a fitting evidence of His faith on the threshold of the Master's public career? Would it not afford Him a convincing assurance of His Father's care as He entered on His perilous way? Would it not commend His Messiahship to the nation with an unanswerable sign? Apparently it was an appeal to Jesus' filial spirit; really it was an invitation to spiritual pride and unholy presumption upon the favour of God—the very sin which by its arrogance and self-complacency had created Pharisaism and devastated the religious life of Israel. If many fall through sins of the senses, as many fall through sins of the spirit, and daring irreverence in the shape of filial freedom is surely the most deceptive of all spiritual sins. What was represented as a loyal acceptance of one of the most gracious of the Divine promises Jesus declared to be sheer blasphemy, and a straining of the Divine patience unto the breaking. With this new rebuff to the Evil One, Jesus added to His abnegation a humility of faith which was never to fail till, from the tragic height of the Cross, where God's will had placed Him, into the depths of the grave, whither He was willing to go, He committed His soul to His Father, and His Father did not put Him to confusion.

Once more at this time Satan tried the Master, and now it is neither through His body, nor His soul, but through His work. From a high mountain the Tempter shows unto this young Man all the kingdoms of the world, of which in the seclusion of Nazareth Jesus may have heard, and their glory, which He could not have imagined. This is the world—not that world of sin, and shame, and sorrow, and pain, in its immense pathos, which God loved and Jesus was to save; but that world of luxury, and pageantry, and cruelty, and unbelief, in its proud insolence, which

would flout God and crucify Jesus. With the same outlook the Master saw His task and His hindrance, and in this meeting was begotten the Temptation. How altogether noble was the task! Was the hindrance inevitable? If Jesus would only do one act of homage to the prince of this world, then he would lay all those kingdoms at Jesus' feet, Who then might do His will without suffering or opposition. One imagines that Jesus may have been tempted again and again after this fashion, in His life, to come to terms with the world, and the more quickly accomplish His work. Suppose that by courteous concession the world, in its priests and Pharisees and rulers, could be disarmed and conciliated, would it be wrong, and would it not be worth the making? What enmity and bloodshed, what martyrdoms and controversies, what sins against light and goodness, would be averted! How swiftly and how smoothly the Kingdom of God might come! Had Jesus only been more careful about the Sabbath rules, had He only been silent on certain occasions, had He only paid some heed to prejudices, had He kept at a distance from sinners! A few compromises, a handful of incense on the altar of the world, and neither He nor any of His disciples need have suffered. His Church has not turned a deaf ear to this insidious advice, or been disinclined to take an evil road to a good end. She has gratefully received tainted gold, and therewith established missions; she has made alliances with kings, and trafficked with her own freedom; she has condescended to cunning and violence to advance her sphere of influence. These things have the servants done, but not the Master. Where the choice was to hold the world from His Father on condition of the Cross, or to receive a show of power from Satan on condition of an act of homage, Jesus made a swift, final decision. And Satan, thrice defeated, departed for a season.

Chapter IX: A Reasonable Method

BETWEEN the work of man and the work of God one difference can never be mistaken: man achieves his end with effort and noise, God does His will with ease and quietness. When we determine to build a house for public use, there is a mighty commotion of speech and deed. With planning and discussion, with strain of arm and sweat of brow, with sound of axe and hammer, is the building completed and opened. It may give distinction to a squalid street, or it may disfigure a landscape; it may be consecrated by the Evangel of Jesus, or be dishonoured by the talk of fools. One day God bethinks Himself of some spot in His beautiful universe which is needing shadow and protection, and He says, "Let there be a tree." A bird of the air carries a seed and drops it — no one seeing — into the soft, moist earth; the sun shines, and the winds blow, and the showers fall — no one thinking — and a shoot of grass appears; the seasons follow one another, and the years come and go — no one considering — till the tiny thing has grown into a sturdy sapling; generations pass and are gathered to their fathers, and, behold, one day — no one celebrating — a cedar of Lebanon. Birds will build their nests among its branches, and sing there the live-long day; travellers

weary with their journey will rest beneath its roof, and go on their way rejoicing; and from far distances the tree stands out against the sky a symbol of vitality and of mercy. Perfect and eternal work is done in secret and cometh without observation, and it was after this fashion Jesus established the great society which is called the Kingdom of God.

When Jesus had been baptised and had been tempted, He returned to the place where a multitude gathered to the Baptist and were waiting for the revelation of the Messiah. Perhaps we do no injustice to the Prophet in supposing that he expected some visible display or some conspicuous act on the part of the Master. It seemed fitting that Jesus should declare Himself on a large scale, and His servants, for the most part, would have considered it bare justice to the new enterprise. As it was, the Master moved among John's hearers unrecognised and unobtrusive, so that to the eye He did not suggest the Messiah about to inaugurate the final religion, but rather a private person in search of a friend. And this was what Jesus is always to be doing, as He moves among men in the ways of life and modestly joins Himself to group after group. Between certain souls there is a latent affinity—sometimes arising from their likeness, the attraction of the good for the good; sometimes from their unlikeness, the longing of the sinner for the saint. Let the two, who are made the one for the other, meet in the largest company, and they will pass by others and come together by an unerring instinct. Secret signs pass between them in an accent of the voice, an expression of the countenance, a word from the lips, even an attitude. It only requires that attention be called, and the recognition is complete. It was only the question of a day or two, and Jesus, threading His way through this heterogeneous gathering of Pharisees, publicans, priests, harlots, scribe ldiers, townsmen, peasants, had found His first friends.

Among the ill-assorted crowd, which had been collected partly by

a fashionable excitement, partly by genuine religious feeling, was a young fisherman from the Lake of Galilee, to whom had been given the supreme advantage of a mother of the same stock as Mary,—for indeed Salome was the Virgin's sister, and John was therefore Jesus' near kinsman. This mother was of the nobler Jewish type, and her soul was inspired by the devout imagination of the Prophets, so that she had created a spiritual horizon before the minds of her sons, and taught them that the chief good in life is not high places in this world, but in the Kingdom of the Messiah. When a man has been so trained, his ears are open to the faintest sound of the spiritual world; and at the rumour of the Baptist this Galilean went to hear him. Salome handed her son over to John, and he prepared him for Jesus. Already this fine nature was longing for the Master and ready to bid Him welcome. Jesus in Nazareth, John in Bethsaida, they had nearer ties than age, and blood, and common station; they were one in soul. It required but the accident of a meeting, and the chief service of the Baptist rendered to Salome's son was the last. "Behold," the Prophet said to some of his disciples as Jesus passed, "there is He whose Divine purity and sacrifice will save a world," and the young Galilean left the Prophet and followed Jesus for ever.

"Master, where dwellest Thou?" were the first words John said to Jesus, and they were to be the endless question of his soul; and the answer to him and his friend Andrew was never to end, "Come and see." The two—His first-fruits—went with Jesus to His lodging, and there they spent the night. Upon them the sudden darkness of the East fell with gentle, concealing curtain, and no one knows what passed between the Master and them, for Andrew was not given to writing, and John was silent on his spiritual secrets; but next morning Jesus had two disciples, and the Kingdom had begun. During the day Andrew found his brother Simon, and we may assume that John had won

his brother James, which doubled the number of the company. On the day following, as they make their first journey together, the disciples see a neighbour of Bethsaida, the town of Peter, and a man of like spirit. They describe him to Jesus, and the Master, who can read every soul, and knows how to deal with each, understands Philip. "Follow Me," He says, with a certain straightforward authority, which a plain, blunt man could appreciate, and Jesus has five disciples. As they go on their way they come to Cana, and Philip now recollects that he also has a friend who was waiting for the Messiah. So he brings Nathanael, with quick insistent words, to the Master, Who satisfies him also, and adds the sixth to His disciples.

It was on lines of such simplicity that the Master began and continued His enterprise; and it must be wise and salutary to make a comparison between the method of Jesus and the method of His disciples in modern times. Never before in the history of our religion have Christian people been so anxious to send the Gospel to the ends of the earth; so determined that the slave and the oppressed should go free; so sensitive to the wrongs of women and children; so pitiful to the poor and needy; so charitable to all fellow-Christians, however wide be the difference in creed and worship. No one can appeal in vain to the mercy and compassion of Christianity; no one need hope to succeed who fans the embers of religious hatred. Never has the spirit of the Master been more richly shed abroad in the hearts of His disciples. On the other hand, never was the Christian Church so tempted by wild and impossible schemes; so open to all kinds of delirious talk; so trustful to unknown and irresponsible adventurers; so considerate to faddists and amiable eccentrics; so impatient of common sense and moderate counsels. Never was our religion so zealous or so impulsive; never so devoted or so excited; never so ready to hear or so careless whether the speaker be a prophet or a charlatan. Never has there been more of Jesus' spirit, or less of Jesus' method.

THE CALLING OF FOUR DISCIPLES

And straightway he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him.—Mark I. 19-20.

When one turns from the religious world of to-day, with its platforms, committees, papers, meetings, where every one is speaking at the pitch of his voice, and no one seems to be saying anything particular, and joins the Master as He moves to and fro establishing the Kingdom of God in individual lives, it is as when one escapes from a country fair, with its drums and shows, its gaudy wares and deafening noise, and finds himself in a country lane where the wild roses brush him from the hedge, and the birds sing overhead. For as He found the first six disciples He found all, with the same shrinking from sensationalism, by the same personal dealing. If great multitudes followed Him, He healed them all in the prodigality of His mercy; then He charged that they should not make it known in His horror of notoriety. Nor was such a case to be explained by local circumstances—it was His principle. Whether He raised a young girl to life, or opened the eyes of the blind man, or loosed the tongue of the dumb, or healed ten lepers, or was transfigured before His disciples, or was revealed to Peter as the Christ, His one commandment was that it should not be made known. People did spread His miracles abroad—it was against His will; they followed Him in crowds—He hid Himself. We are astonished by His conduct, and commentators are at their wits' end for an explanation. It seems natural to us that any one who had made so great an impression would advertise himself in every possible way, natural to estimate a successful ministry by the crowds which attend, and the food for public talk. We have come to imagine an effectual and useful servant of the Kingdom as one who does strive and cry, and who uses all kinds of means to make his voice heard everywhere.

This may be very arresting, but it may not be irrelevant to point out that it was not the method of Jesus, since the chief feature of His public work was spiritual modesty and refinement. No one ever proposed to do so great a work; no one ever had so

ingenuous a plan. No reformer has ever appeared so influential as Jesus, none made so little noise. No evangelist can be mentioned beside Jesus; none has been so calm. Follow Jesus in the little synagogues of Galilee or the Temple of Jerusalem, on the mountain side or the lake shore, into private houses or judgment-halls, and His manner is the same. If there be two exceptions, they only prove the rule—where He cleanses the Temple with a certain violence, and where He pours forth His invective on the Pharisees; and then we are amazed. This hot indignation and dramatic anger were unlike Jesus, and prove the intolerable abuses of contemporary religion. His was not the manner of this bustling and feverish world: it was the grand manner of the Kingdom of God, beautiful in its simplicity. Jesus did His unique work, from His interview with John to His speech with the penitent thief, in a fashion which is beyond the most fastidious criticism. He never posed for effect, never raised His voice to secure attention, never condescended to vulgarity, never allowed Himself to slip into extravagance, never treated His hearers with spiritual insolence. Our Master did not set Himself to attract mobs; He tried to come into contact with individual souls; He was uneasy with a following, gaping at miracles and waiting for a dole of bread; He was at home with a few disciples concerned about spiritual things. His idea was that (almost) every man could be reached by reason, whether he be Pharisee or publican, although, of course, in the end he might not obey. Jesus did not therefore scold, or terrify, or perplex men, nor was He given either to empty appeals which have no real meaning, or to playing on the emotions by pathetic images. He rather plied His hearers with such clear, sweet, persuasive reasoning concerning the love of God, the misery of sinning, the greatness of the soul, the excellence of the Kingdom of God, that His voice was like the lyre of Orpheus, which made Tantalus forget his thirst; and His disciples were made

willing in the day of His power because all that was noblest within them consented and gave joyful welcome to His appeal. It is at this point in an estimate of the method of Jesus that one ought to distinguish between two words which were constantly confounded by Mr. Isaac Taylor and other writers at the beginning of the century, and which are not kept very clearly apart unto this day. One is Enthusiasm, and the other is Fanaticism. It is not uncommon to hear some self-confident and aggressive individual saying: "They call me a fanatic; well, I am not ashamed of the name: it were good for the world were there ten times more fanaticism"; while he really ought to be very much troubled to be such a man, and ought to know that it would be a fearful disaster if the world were given over to this mad and gloomy spirit. What he very likely means is that he has been charged with enthusiasm, and accepts the charge, as he very well may, as a compliment. Enthusiasm is a temper of mind altogether holy and beautiful, and Jesus was the Chief of all enthusiasts. Fanaticism is a question of method, and from this excess Jesus was altogether and always free. When St. Francis went to preach the Gospel to the soldiers, and offered to go through fire if it would convert the Saracen to Christ; or when Xavier, stretching out his hands to the farthest East, cried, "More sufferings, more sufferings, Lord," one has very beautiful instances of enthusiasm. When Simon Stylites stood upon a pillar for no end but vainglory, and the monks of Alexandria tore Hypatia to pieces for the glory of God, you have conspicuous illustrations of fanaticism. An enthusiast is always worthy of respect, from Moses, who threw in his lot with the children of Israel, to Gordon, who gave his life for Africa. No one indeed has ever done work of the first order in whose breast this Divine spark did not burn. Fanaticism is sometimes weak and silly, sometimes fierce and intolerant, it is always injurious and to be condemned. Fanaticism is the degeneration of enthusiasm,

its bastard shape; it is enthusiasm without intelligence or elevation. As often as one is inclined to confound the two, let him read Jesus' Life again. Was there ever any life so devoted to the work of God and the service of man? Was there ever any life so cleansed from foolishness and bitterness? Did ever fire burn with so unquenchable and so pure a flame?

One can imagine Jesus — as is written in the Gospels — taking little children in His arms and blessing them, or stretching out His hands to a congregation of hard-working country folk and saying, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"; or speaking so graciously in a publican's house that at the very presence of Jesus avarice fell like broken chains from a sinner's life; or appearing alone to Simon Peter and hearing his confession. Those are acts entirely becoming Jesus, and the very outcome of His beautiful soul. One cannot imagine the Master making a young child come forward at a public meeting and tell when it was converted, or asking His disciples in an audience to stand up while the others sat in their places; or breaking in upon the holiest of all within a human soul with some rude question, or insisting on one of the heart-broken penitents who crowded to His side relating his experiences in the far country. Such things are not written in the Gospels: if we read them in a newly-discovered Gospel, we should know that Gospel to be apocryphal; and if an angel from heaven told them, we should not believe him, for we know that they were impossible for Jesus. They are the religious gaucheries of men whose spiritual sense is dull, and whose mental fibre is coarse. Our Master had too delicate a touch and too much respect for the soul to make such mistakes. It is almost a profanity to mention such methods in the same breath with the name of Jesus, but that only shows as by a foil how perfect were all His ways and how divine was His method.

This method of Jesus rests on two principles He was ever preach-

ing or exemplifying; and the first was the paramount value of character. While the Pharisees had taught the people that religion consisted in repeating certain shibboleths and performing certain rites, and that he who was orthodox in doctrine and ceremony was a good man, Jesus insisted that religion stood in the condition of the soul, and that he whose soul was holy, alone was good. It were better to stamp a spiritual pattern on one soul than to persuade a thousand men to say, "Lord, Lord." The Kingdom of God was within—an atmosphere of humility, sacrifice, purity, love, a spirit of heavenly thoughts and unselfish actions. It came therefore slowly, surely, quietly, as each man was inwardly changed into the Divine likeness. And Jesus believed that the best means of accomplishing this change was the influence of a person. What all the doctrines and all the rules in the world cannot do, may be attained effectually and unconsciously by a friendship. In the company of a friend who lives with God and brings God near to the soul, one is ashamed of himself, and aspires after better things. He slips his past, and puts on a new shape; he catches his friend's spiritual accent and attitude; he begins to think with him, and ends by acting like him. Jesus proposes to save His disciples by giving a new character to the soul, and this He would convey by uniting His disciples and Himself in a lasting and spiritual private friendship.

Perhaps the simplicity of Jesus' method may at first cause disappointment, and seem to have a poor chance of success. How long it will take the Messiah to fulfil the visions of the Prophets and His own commission by making friends with a man here and there, even although He makes the man like Himself! But is there no other test of success than numbers? and are we sure that noise and noisy methods have had the larger harvests? The most effective apostle who ever preached in England was John Wesley, and he was the sanest and quietest of men. No preacher of this century has given such an impetus to Christian thought

as Robertson of Brighton, and Robertson had an almost morbid dislike of garish popularity. No evangelist of our time did so much to change the lives of young men as Henry Drummond, and none could be farther removed from rant and coarseness. Fanaticism is a confession of weakness; he who has the truth does not need to shout; he who does God's work can dispense with sensationalism.

Every servant in God's cause can make his choice: he can work either by faith or sight; and if he works by faith, he will have his trials. It is hard to see others succeed by means his conscience does not allow him to use; to be counted an incapable and a failure; to work in narrow circumstances and to reap slender harvests. Yet this faithful servant has his own encouragements, and they are not to be despised. If he has lost the present, his is the future; and if only one voice approves, that is the voice of the Master.

Chapter X: A Reasonable Life

WHEN any one has undertaken a high office, no slight interest attaches to his first public action, and it has often revealed the spirit of his whole future life. As Moses stands before Pharaoh, and calls the king to repentance and justice, one sees the lawgiver of Israel who shall lay the Ten Words on the conscience of his people. It was no accident that Elijah should make his first appearance at Ahab's court with the prophecy of a long drought, for his rôle was judgment, and his very face an omen of trouble to a weak and wicked king. No sooner had St. Paul been converted and baptised than he showed himself in the synagogues, where he had been so distinguished by his rabbinical learning, and where now he was to use his unmatched dialectic for the preaching and defence of Jesus. And when John Baptist arrested some travellers one day with his commandment of repentance, and left them trembling, he struck that note which was to sound with insistent reiteration till its wholesome harshness was lost in the sound of Jesus' Evangel. As soon as Jesus had collected His six friends, the beginning of the world-wide society, He could not be long hid, for now He had claimed to be a Master, and must take a Master's place before the people. And Jesus made His entrance into life

as the Christ not in the Temple, nor in a synagogue, nor at a funeral, nor in a sick room, but at a marriage feast.

It seems that the mother of Jesus and His family had removed from Nazareth to Cana about the time that He left His home and went to be baptised of John, and that a marriage was to take place in the circle. As the Virgin carried herself on the occasion with the anxiety and authority of a near relative, either the bride or bridegroom must have been of her family. The choice will therefore lie between the son or the daughter of one of Jesus' elder brethren; and since we read that He was formally bidden to the marriage, and the marriage feast was held in the bridegroom's house, we may safely conclude that the bridegroom was the stranger, and the bride of His family. Between the bride and Jesus there would have been a close and pleasant tie in Nazareth since her infancy. It was not in His manhood and public life that the Master first learned to love children, and became their friend. Between the children of Nazareth and the gentle Carpenter there must have been much pleasant traffic, as they loitered by His door and watched Him at work, yet never so busy but He could fling them some gracious word, or wandered with Him on the hillside at eventide, where He would show unto His young playmates the wonderful beauty of the flowers and of all His Father's works. Among the children this little maid would be especially dear, as being of His own people, and between her and Jesus there would spring up an intimacy, so that to Him she would turn in the little joys and sorrows of her life; and when her chief joy came, this bride would most of all desire that Jesus, who seemed to her the very perfection of holiness and wisdom, should be at her wedding and give His blessing.

Before that day arrived the change had come in Jesus' life, and He had gone out from Nazareth and been baptised into His Messianic work. Behind Him lay for ever the little home,

CANA (KEFR-KENNA) FROM THE ROAD TO NAZARETH

and the simple toil of the workshop, and the pleasant leisure hours, and the fellowship of the family circle. Before Him now were lonely nights of vigil, and repeated temptations of the Evil One, and days of exhausting spiritual labour, and conflicts of hot debate, and woeful persecutions. Already He had tasted the Messianic life in the Jordan and the wilderness. His people knew that He had gone to be a Teacher; He only knew what that meant. It was not to be expected that at the beginning of His enterprise Jesus should turn aside from great affairs to attend a village wedding; it was hardly fitting that the Messiah should introduce Himself and His disciples to the people on so simple and joyous an occasion. No one guiding himself by conventional rules, no ordinary man, had dared. It was altogether characteristic of the Master to leave the Jordan and arrange this journey so as to be present at His friend's wedding, and altogether characteristic of His mission that this should be its revelation. When the Messiah comes forth from the shadow it is at a marriage feast.

It is likely that He had been despaired of; it is certain that His band of disciples could not have been anticipated—who were now invited on very short notice—and it was too late now to reinforce the feast. There was enough of bread, but the wine for that humble home was harder to obtain, and it threatened to fail; and if it should seem to any one that this would matter little to temperate folk, he has missed the inwardness of the incident. Two families would be put to shame on a high day in their life because they had bidden their guests and had failed in hospitality, the bride's almost as much as the bridegroom's. The Virgin, with her motherly sympathy and quick understanding of narrow circumstances, takes in the situation, and turns to her Son. He had been her resort in every little strait of those years, and He had never failed to bring her help. She could hardly have imagined what He would do, but she had learned

to believe that any matter might be left with Him. He could not be expected to know that the wine was coming to an end, and that His young kinswoman would be put to confusion. Calling Him aside, His mother told Him so that none but John heard, "They have no wine."

His answer was kindly and respectful, however it may sound in our ears, which have lost the beautiful accent in "woman"; but it marked a certain change in the relation between Jesus and His mother. Hitherto He had been a private person, with no obligations save to her—ready to hear her advice, willing to give way to her, concerned only that she should have comfort, satisfied if she were satisfied. Now He was the Anointed of God, with the charge of a high work laid on Him, for which He must make the last sacrifices, to which He must give all His time, in which He could take no directions save from God. Unto the last hour of His life would the Master love and cherish His mother; but with the great affair of His calling she must not meddle. Unto her had come that hour of mixed pain and pride to a mother, when her son goes out on his own course, and when even she must be second to his life work. She must now stand aside and watch Him in silence, while He did what she did not understand, and went beyond the care she would have bestowed upon Him. Her faith was sometimes to fail in the days to come, but at Cana she was calm and confident. Mary turned unto the servants, "Whatsoever He saith unto you do it."

Jesus was soon to do greater wonders in raising the dead; but when He turned the water into wine, we have an altogether delightful opening to the public life of Jesus. It was an act perfectly becoming the circumstances, because it was so thoughtful, so genial, so courteous, so overflowing, conceived to crown this marriage with dignity and joy. He was to be in every situation that which was fitting, so that from Cana to Calvary one is lost

in admiration at the sweet reasonableness of the Master's life. If Jesus once used a term of bitter contempt, and called a man "that fox," it was Herod Antipas, the most contemptible creature in the Gospels. Once He broke out into invective so scathing that we read it with trembling unto this day; it was against the opprobrium of religion in all ages — the Pharisees who professed instead of doing, and proselytised instead of saving. Once Jesus turned on a faithful friend, and called him a devil: it was when Simon Peter advised Jesus to play the coward and avoid the Cross. Once He rebuked His beloved John: it was when the hot-tempered disciple would have called down fire upon a Samaritan village for discourtesy. Once he grew suddenly angry: it was when meddlesome disciples would have kept little children at a distance. If coarse-minded men tried to put a guilty woman to shame in His presence, He would not lift His eyes till they had departed. If a fallen woman washed His feet with her tears, He detected her penitence, and sent her into peace. If He dined at a Pharisee's house, He gently ridiculed the scramble for seats; if He went into a publican's, it was to set at liberty the soul of His host. When the Galileans wished to make him a king, He hid Himself; when the Judeans wanted to crucify Him, He yielded Himself. When an honest scribe asked a plain question, He satisfied him; when certain tried to trick Him about Cæsar's penny, He put a fool's cap on them. Take Jesus where you will He is ever beyond criticism. He never confuses either men or circumstances, never spares a knave or a hypocrite, never hurts a penitent or a good man. Whether He denounces or approves, agrees or refuses, your reason says, "Well done." Jesus was ever "behoveful," as Hooker has it, or as the people themselves once said, having an unconscious sense of something wonderfully becoming, "He doeth all things well." The reasonableness of the Master's life appears when one marks how He avoided the falsehood of extremes. Human life has been

too often deformed because it has been distracted between two one-sided ideals. The one cares for the body to the depreciation of the soul, the other exalts the soul to the contempt of the body. The one rejoices without reserve in this fair world, the other ignores it beside the glory of the world to come. The one counts knowledge the chief good, the other, faith. The one makes culture the end of life, the other, righteousness. The nation which embodied the former ideal was the Greek, the nation which embodied the latter was the Jew. The nearest individual type of the former was a Pagan man of letters, the best representative of the latter was John Baptist. To-day we see one kind of life in a cultivated man of the world, with his literary tastes, his love of art, his genial charity, his sympathy with everything human, his general sweetness; we see the opposite tendency in, let us say, a soldier of the Salvation Army (whose devotion the writer regards with sincere respect), or a Plymouth Brother, or some other of our modern Montanists, with his suspicion of culture, his indifference to the beauty of the world, his avoidance of human society, his superiority over his fellow-Christians, his sad austerity, his admirable religious intensity. Were one to name a writer of the past, instinct with that paganism which is still in our grain beneath a veneer of Christian civilisation, and which comes at times to the surface of our thinking and writing, I should say Horace (Virgil was a semi-Christian saint); and for another saturated with that unrelenting asceticism which blends with Catholicism and Protestantism alike, and is ever rising up in revolt against our paganism, I should give the author of the *Imitation of Christ*. Upon many study tables Horace and À Kempis lie side by side, each expressing one side of our complex human nature.

It ought at once to be granted that asceticism has its place and function, and that the Baptist was as much justified as Jesus. There are days when the world becomes so swollen and cor-

rupt, so insolent and dominant, that the prophets of God are bound to put on sackcloth and deny themselves things lawful, and go into the lonely wilderness and lift up their voice in uncompromising and insistent protest. There are also special forms of moral and religious service to which a few are distinctly called, and for which they must make sacrifices of meat and drink, home and family ties. As there have been ascetics of science, of letters, and of arms, so there are ascetics of religion, to whom all honour is to be paid, on whom the blessing of God has most evidently rested. As a general rule of life, however, asceticism has not been justified either by its practical results or by the character of its subjects. The ascetical strain which came in after Jesus, and without His authority or example, has wrought more mischief to our religion than all the forces of the world. It has introduced a barbaric element into theology, seen in the bleeding Christs of the crucifixes and the gloomy conceptions of God expressed in certain creeds; it has lowered the purity of the family to a second order, and placed a nun above a mother; it has refused to recognise the hand of God beyond a certain sphere, and has again and again divorced culture and religion; it has darkened many lives and embittered the sweetness of life. It has been the nightmare of religion.

Of course if there are only the two ways of it—the way of the Sadducees and the way of the Baptist—and one had to choose either to be a pagan or an ascetic, then any serious person would take asceticism without hesitation. If harmonious and all-round perfection be impossible for human nature, and a man must be maimed somewhere, let us have perfection on those highest reaches where the soul has communion with God, and let other sides of our nature wither and perish. Better be a monk writhing on his cell floor than a pagan crowned with roses; but one does not want to be a monk, and both extremes are unreasonable. When a certain type of modern resolves the sense of sin into

dyspepsia, he offends against reason because he has denied the spiritual in man. When a saint departs without bidding his mother farewell, and walks a day's journey beside the lovely Lake of Geneva without seeing it, he also offends against reason, for he has denied the human in man. Paganism is a headless figure, asceticism one without hands or feet; and if we cannot have the whole, let us have the head. If it be needful, then let a man fling Horace into the fire, with Homer and Virgil, and keep À Kempis; but if he has chosen the better portion, still it remains that he has missed perfection.

One of the moderns, whose delicate lambent satire played very profitably round the limitations of our religious thought, has asked how Virgil and Shakespeare would have lived in the *Mayflower* with the Puritans, and leaves it to be inferred not over well. Perhaps not; but that does not mean that either party was perfect: it only means that the Humanists had something which the ascetics lacked, and that the ascetics were strong where the Humanists were weak. We dare not belittle Puritanism: we must love Humanism, and we cling to the belief that they are not enemies. Would not the perfect life be one wherein that sympathy with every human interest, which is the charm of Shakespeare, is combined with that passion for God which burned in the hearts of the Hebrew prophets? This would be life not divided and crippled, but harmonious and complete; life without fear or bondage, life rich and fruitful. This would be life according to the very ideal of reason; it has never been seen but once, and that was in the Gospels. You turn from the classics, charmed but dissatisfied; something is wanting—spirituality; you turn from the Puritans, stimulated but dissatisfied; something is wanting—humanity. You turn to Jesus, to find earth and heaven meeting in His life.

Jesus came from the awful solitude of the wilderness and the temptation of the Evil One. He threw Himself into the joy of

a marriage feast, and would delight to speak of Himself afterwards as a Bridegroom. He spent nights in prayer on the mountain side, and by day would enter into the games of the children. Every day He denied Himself, being poor and homeless, and He feasted also with publicans and sinners. His meat and His drink were to found the kingdom of God, and unto that end He died upon the Cross, but He was not indifferent to the flowers of the field or the glory of the sky, or the springing of the seed, or the birds of the air. Jesus was chiefly intent on the salvation of the soul with its vast possibilities and opportunities, but He entered kindly into the labours, joys, humour, sorrows of ordinary human life. Nothing Divine was foreign to Him, nor anything human. Jesus stands aside in His gravity from a world that was crying, "What shall we eat and what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed?" He also stands in His sympathy apart from the Baptist with His raiment of camel's hair and leathern girdle. He only has never come short and never exceeded. He only has compassed the length and breadth and depth and height of life, Who

"*Saw life steadily and saw it whole,*"

and in His presence and at His word the water of life, in all its vessels of love and labour, culture and religion, has turned into wine.

Chapter XI: The Verdict of Jerusalem

URING His public life Jesus visited many districts within His fixed boundary of the Holy Land, from the banks of the Jordan, where He made His first disciples among pious Jews, to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, where He was amazed at the faith of a Canaanite woman; from Sychar, where He gave a Samaritan to drink of the water of life, to Cæsarea Philippi, where St. Peter made his classical confession. His name will, however, be associated with four places only: the village where He was born; that other where He spent His private life; the town which He made His own by word and miracle; and the city which crucified Him; but, among the four, one has a final preëminence. In His own day it was one of the many ironies of His lot to be called a Nazarene, and to have it flung in His face that no good thing could come out of Nazareth; while, in fact, He was born in the home of David, and the people of Nazareth disowned Him with rude violence. In later days it has been one of the glories of His fame that, while He selected Capernaum for its candour and kindliness, and made it His residence, and while He never entered Jerusalem except of necessity, and Jerusalem gave Him nothing but a cross, it is not to the heap

of ruins by the Galilean lake, the very doubtful site of Jesus' own city, that pilgrims make their way, but to the Mount of Olives, and to the Church of the Sepulchre. Time changes the proportion of things; and although Jesus lived months in Capernaum, for days in Jerusalem, every one knows that Jesus won His crowning victory, not where He healed the sick and raised the dead in Galilee, but where He Himself was bound, and where He died in Jewry. And as conquerors take their titles from chief battlefields, so the Master, who was once Jesus of Nazareth, is now, in our thought if not our speech, Jesus of Jerusalem.

It was, after all, of secondary importance where the birthplace of Jesus was, or the scene of His labors; it was impossible that He Himself or His care should be independent of Jerusalem. The capital of a country is not as any other city, however large and interesting: it is supreme. While a nation is young and unconscious, while it is only forming and has not realised itself, the capital is but a name. As soon as the nation is a unity with a character, a tradition, a mission, it concentrates itself in a centre. One place becomes not only its seat of government, but its seat of thought and feeling. Into it are gathered the thinkers, leaders, flower of the people. Within the length and breadth of the land there may be many types, but the metropolitan is the one which rules and is representative. The metropolis is the brain into which the nerves gather, from which the will acts, where everything is felt, appreciated, decided. When one speaks of the Roman empire, one means Rome; Greece is a synonym for Athens; Paris has monopolised France; and Berlin has come to be the heart of the greater Germany; notwithstanding a constitution protecting local independence, and the vast distances of the United States, Washington is asserting her place; and with every year London is more and more absorbing the strength of England.

Towards the capital the masters in every department of letters, art, politics, religion, gravitate: it is on that field great issues are fought and decided. While the provinces have a voice, the capital, for weal or woe, decides the destinies of a land and a people.

Among the chief cities of the world, Jerusalem had (and still has) a place beyond parallel. She was chosen in the first flush of Hebrew nationalism, and established by the founder of the royal dynasty, round whose person gathers a perennial fascination, and whose name, under the hand of each new prophet, blossoms afresh into magnificent predictions. Jerusalem stood on the site of an ancient fortress, and was beautiful for situation, being girt about with hills, and of striking elevation. Austere, strong, commanding, massive, it became this city to be the capital of the Hebrew people, and the shrine of the Hebrew faith. Here the throne of David was established, and from Sion went forth the Law. Here also in due time was built the Temple of Jehovah, and the ark came to rest. Unto this place, from the ends of the land and of the world, came the pious Jew to worship God in His House on the great festivals, going up with a song, his children and his kinsfolk with him. Far away in some foreign land, the exiled Jew poured out his heart in unequalled threnodies, wherein he thirsted for God as the hart for the water brooks, and envied the bird which made its nest under the eaves of God's House. The Jew carried Jerusalem not in his memory or in his loyalty, but in his heart, till this city grew into the very hope and ideal of God's kingdom, so that St. Paul compared the state of grace unto the new Jerusalem, and St. John saw the Holy City coming down from Heaven as a bride adorned for her husband.

The dispersion of the Jews and the loss of national independence did not reduce, but rather reinforced, Jerusalem, giving her a stronger and more pious hold on her children. More than

ever she became the centre of union for a people politically broken and persecuted, more than ever their authoritative guide in the growing perplexities and difficulties of their life. When an army is defeated, it falls back (if it should be so fortunate) on an impregnable base; and on the capital, with her history, traditions, sanctity, the Jew rested with unquestioning faith in the days of our Lord. Here as in a citadel, was preserved safe from harm the pure creed; here was held forth the example of divine worship; here the supreme court of thought and conduct sat. If any one stepped forth from private life and presumed to teach, to Jerusalem he must come for approval, from Jerusalem he could neither escape nor hide. If he went into the wilderness, there would her agents find and question him; if he kept himself to Galilee, there would her spies dog him. He might go to distant cities of the Gentiles, but his case would be reported to Jerusalem, and a decision issued. As soon as Jesus assumed the position of a rabbi He came within the province of Jerusalem, and sooner or later must be judged by the authorities of the Jewish Church.

Jesus began His ministry in Galilee, and seems at once to have won the good will of the people, so that He paid His first visit to Jerusalem as a prophet with some reputation, and it appeared as if He might leave the provinces behind Him. This matters little in any country, and in that land it mattered nothing; it was only at the best a success of estimation. Galilee did itself honour by its reception of Jesus, and one can understand its ready appreciation. The atmosphere in that northern province was simple, unaffected, liberal; the atmosphere of Jerusalem was conventional, narrow, artificial. It were wrong to conclude that Galilee had never produced prophets and great men, for she also had her prophets and heroes; or that Galilee was rude and uncivilised, for that province was saturated with Gentile civilisation; but there is no doubt that

in Jesus' day the native Galilean was considered unlearned according to the standard of culture in Jerusalem, and that his very accent was an offence in the capital. He was but a poor ally in a conflict with the central Power—quick to respond, quick also to desist, full of sympathy, but easily cowed; a man whose enthusiastic hosanna would die away into a timid quaver before the fierce, strident cry of the Jew of Jerusalem, "Crucify Him, crucify Him." Against the sullen and massive strength of Jerusalem the bright spirit and kindly devotion of Galilee would dash itself in vain. It is difficult to imagine any one from the provinces conciliating Jerusalem; but when one came from Nazareth, a by-word for Philistinism, and came not with the theology of the schools, but with a fresh and winsome Evangel which had in it the breath of the wind and the fragrance of the flowers, it was not difficult to prophesy his fate. If any one could have awaited the judgment of Jerusalem with confidence, it was Jesus, for here the light of ancient faith had burned most clearly, and Jesus was the very glory preached by the Prophets. If Isaiah alone had not made the scholars of Israel ready for the Master, then it would seem as if neither prophecy nor scholarship were of any use. From the eighth century the best minds of a nation were being trained in the likeness of the Messiah, and yet the most famous and honoured could not distinguish it from that of a heretic and a criminal when he stood before Him. It is, beyond measure, distressing —so sad an irony on all human study; it is almost incredible —so immense a stupidity. One must, however, remember, in order to appreciate the situation, that from that very date on to Jesus' day there had been two schools of religious thought in Jerusalem with very different tendencies and effects. One was ritual and dogmatic, which laid the emphasis on sacrifices and observance, on nationalism and customs, so that one who kept the Temple rites and made many prayers and hated

the Gentiles was a good Jew. The other was moral and spiritual, laying stress on the character of the heart, on the conduct of life, on the knowledge of God, so that he who loved mercy and did justly and walked humbly with God was the true son of Israel. The priest was the type of the one party, although, owing to circumstances, the Pharisee was its defender in Jesus' day; the prophet was the forefront of the other, and between the two there had been a long and irreconcilable feud, which indeed has extended to all lands and all ages. What the priests did we can see in the minute and wearisome ceremonial, which was fastened as an intolerable yoke on the Jewish people. What the prophets said we have read in the most virile and elevated religious literature ever produced by any people. Against the bondage and futility, the unreality and hypocrisy, of ritual the prophets lifted up their voice with biting sarcasm, with hot indignation, and with irresistible spiritual force. They did not spare the foolishness of sacrifices, with their minute and loathsome regulations, "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?" They were very severe on those early Pharisees who offered ceremonies instead of righteousness. "Bring no more vain oblations: incense is an abomination to Me: the new moons and sabbaths . . . I cannot away with. Wash you, make you clean . . . cease to do evil, learn to do well." They struck out the eternal and searching contrast between rites and reality. "Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire. . . . Then said I, Lo, I come. . . . I delight to do Thy will, O God." They pierced below all forms to the heart of things. "Thou desirest not sacrifice. . . Thou delightest not in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise."

Between these schools there can be no reconciliation nor any *via media*. The priest may admit that righteousness of life is desirable, but he will insist that it can be of no avail without sacrifices; and the prophet will at once grant that through the barbarism of sacrifices men have struggled into the secret of religion, but he will insist that the ground of acceptance with God must be the obedience of the heart, not the blood of goats and bulls. For long centuries in Israel had the priest and the prophet been at war, and there can be no question who was the better. Among the priests there were some brave and good men, from Phinehas, who executed judgment, to Zacharias, the father of Jesus' forerunner, and there were liars and charlatans among the prophets, but on the whole and as a class the priests were a hindrance and burden to Israel, from Aaron, who taught the people to worship the golden calf, to Caiaphas, who led his nation to the great crime of history; and on the whole and as a class the prophets were a strength and inspiration, from Moses, who gave to Israel the moral code, unto John Baptist, who prepared them for Jesus. Unfortunately there can be as little question who, to appearance, won. The priest was established, endowed, honoured, obeyed; the prophet was solitary, feared, persecuted; the priest had every advantage of prejudice and custom; the prophet had only the secret respect of the reason and conscience. It was easy to satisfy the priest—follow the ritual and do then as you please; the prophet demanded holiness. The priest taught that you belonged to an exclusive nation—the favourites of God, but the prophet would on occasion suggest that Nineveh was as dear to God. So the prophet was defeated and slain, and the priest rejoiced in his insolence at Jerusalem. And Jesus was a prophet in whom the intensity and spirituality of all the prophets, from Elijah to the Baptist, had been gathered up and glorified.

The collision between Jesus and Jerusalem was inevitable from the beginning, and, as it happened, it came on Jesus' first official visit to the capital. As a lad at a critical period of His life He had visited the Temple, and there He had been inspired by the teaching of the rabbis. Now he saw things with larger, deeper eyes. Unto Jesus the Temple of Jerusalem was the visible symbol of His Father's House, although there was ever before His eyes that House not made with hands, eternal and spiritual in the Heavenly Places; and the honour and purity of the Temple were dear to the Master. To Jesus as a prophet the dangers of an elaborate ritual must have been very present, and to Him as a man the barbarity of the sacrifices must have been a keen offence. Conceive what must have been the horror and disgust of this tender and delicate Soul as He witnessed that carnival of butchery—the streaming altars, the stench of carnage, the gory priests, the gutters running blood. It was characteristic of Jesus, however, that He let this savagery of worship pass, as it had been to pious souls of the past a gross picture of the hideousness of sin and the surrender of self to God, as it was not at least a hypocrisy and worldly gain. There was that going on within the outer places of the Temple which Jesus could not for an instant tolerate, because it had nothing to do with piety, because it was the very destruction of religion. Since an immense number of unfortunate animals were needed for the sacrifices, certain enterprising traders had started a cattle market in the outer court; and as it was necessary to change Gentile coins into shekels wherewith to pay the Temple tax, other enterprising bankers had started a money exchange. Within the very precincts of God's House cattle were bought and sold, with loud, heated bargains, and the chink of money was heard from morning to night, and it occurs to one at once that it would be the traders and not the simple folk from the country who would have the

best of the transactions. As Jesus looked upon the scene—the big, coarse, cattle dealers bullying some poor Jew of the Dispersion, the sly moneychangers cheating a widow on the turn of exchange—He was very angry. Availing Himself of His prophetical authority, before which this herd of hucksters trembled and cowered, and supported by the goodwill of the people, He drove far the cattle and upset the money stalls, using a whip of small cords, and declaring that they had turned a House of Prayer into a den of thieves.

If one should look at this action from a worldly point of view, it can hardly be called an auspicious opening to Jesus' prophetical career in Jerusalem. His conduct was unguarded and uncompromising, showing little sense either of the awfulness of Jerusalem or the obscurity of Galilee. By one stroke He offended the priests, whose interests were bound up with the Temple merchandise, and the Pharisees, who stood by the customs of the past. What would this daring young Prophet do next? Who would be safe? If the hucksters were cast out to-day, it would be the turn of the priests with their empty sacrifices to-morrow, and the scribes with their empty doctrines the day after. If one regards the cleansing of the Temple from a spiritual standpoint, then it was grand, and a good omen of Jesus' prophetical work. A Prophet had arisen who revived the ancient spirit of Isaiah, and who dared to attack the abuses of religion before the eyes of all the people. Nor was He a hermit like the Baptist, or a mere iconoclast, for He was one who rejoiced in everything human, and wrought miracles of mercy. His gentleness was to the weak, His anger against the strong; and if He was eaten up with zeal, it was the zeal of God's House.

The cleansing of the Temple declared Jesus to be on the side of the prophets and against the priests; and on that visit the authorities marked the Master as a turbulent and dangerous demagogue, whom they must watch and might have to sup-

press. It was not their policy to show their hand or to act rashly, since they were not indifferent to the favour of the people, and the influence of John Baptist had to be reckoned with. The prophets had been a power — very disturbing to priests — and they had secured one advantage at least for real religion — that a prophet must be heard. It would be madness to silence Jesus at once; He was, at least, a candidate for the prophetship, and even such an iconoclastic action as the cleansing of the Temple was sanctioned by prophetical usage. People were already quoting from Isaiah in his favour, and He had Himself used certain words of Jeremiah in a very bold fashion. Let Him rather be put to a conventional and unobjectionable test: and so the rulers came to the Master, representing with smooth courtesy and plausible words, that as He did the prophet's work He ought to show them the prophet's sign. It was not that they doubted or wished to criticise Him, but they had a responsibility in this matter of religion, and the sign was to be simply for their satisfaction and His confirmation. Jesus replied with one of His characteristic riddles, which He used to baffle dishonest people and to stimulate His disciples' thought. Destroy this Temple in its strength and magnificence — by which He evidently intended the worn-out system of sacrifices and forms — and in three days — a proverbial figure for a short time — I will raise it up; by which He meant that He would create a new and nobler religion. His critics could make nothing of His answer at the time, but they stored it away, in all its audacity and perplexity, and some two years later it served the rulers' purpose, for by this very answer, twisted to their own meaning by perjured witnesses, the Master's life was sworn away. Nothing more passed at that time between Jesus and the Sanhedrim, but the Jewish Church had practically rejected Jesus, and His death charge was already in the archives of the Jewish Inquisition.

Chapter XII: His Own City

IT is a law of human life that while the seen passes and is forgotten, the unseen remains and is treasured. What confers on a place immortality and a secure hold, on history and men's hearts, is not its situation or size, its wealth or grandeur, but the heroes who have lived there and the work they have done. Unto the end of the chapter people will pass kings' castles and huge cities to visit Stratford-on-Avon and Grasmere, Concord and Assisi, for the sake of choice souls who have made life richer and brought Heaven nearer. Generation after generation wants to see the woods of Shakespere, the hills of Wordsworth, the sweet Umbrian ways along which St. Francis sang of Jesus, the path to Thoreau's wood Emerson paced so often. Contemporaries cannot tell for certain who are the immortals of their day; time alone, like an irresistible and impartial acid, will destroy the common paste and declare the imperishable gem. We are apt to be impressed by some blatant personage, swollen with the honours of the people; we overlook the man of genius whose name will pass into the records of the race. Shrewd traders may cram a city with silver and gold and its name be forgotten in a century; let one of its people write a hundred pages of true

literature, and he will have rescued his birthplace from oblivion for ever. It is not the king, nor the soldier, nor the millionaire who glorifies his dwelling-place unto all generations; it is the poet, the saint, and the prophet.

A supreme illustration of this law can be found on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. In the beginning of the first century two towns stood on the western edge of the Sea of Galilee, and only a short distance apart, which were a visible and striking contrast. One was Tiberias, the political capital of the province of Galilee and the residence of Herod Antipas, its Tetrarch, whose magnificent palace was reflected on the bosom of the lake, and whose licentious court scandalised the district. The other was Capernaum, a town which had neither distinction nor fashion, but depended for a modest prosperity on its fishing industry, its custom house, and its situation on the caravan road between Damascus and the coast. It was a busy little commercial town in the shadow of glittering, brazen Tiberias, whose citizens worked hard for their bread, and saw the great folk pass in their glory to and from the local capital. There is no mention of the town in Old Testament history; and if Josephus gives it a place in his pages, it is only because he was carried there after an accident, yet to-day, save for a medical mission, the miserable village of Tiberias is neglected, while learned persons dispute keenly the site of Capernaum, and travellers are thankful that amid the ruins of Tell-Hüm the remains of a synagogue can still be found.

Some devout Christians will not visit Palestine because the glory of the land has departed under the Turkish blight and the profanity of modern improvements. This Galilee, barren and deserted, is very different from the smiling land, with its crowded villages, through which Jesus moved in His pity and grace. Others have a pious interest in seeing the lake which Jesus so often crossed, and treading the great roads along which He went

on His journeys. Whether they have ever seen the Holy Land or not, all the disciples of the Master must carry within their imagination the map of Galilee for ever associated with Jesus, and this map has been created by love. It matters not how prosperous or famous a town may have been, if Jesus did not honour it with His presence, it will have no place in this sacred geography; it is nothing that a village was small and obscure if the Master wrought His mighty works there, or found a disciple, or received a kindness, its name is written in imperishable letters; and this map, which is rather a picture and a home, has for its heart and centre not Tiberias but Capernaum, since Tiberias was only the city of Herod Antipas, but Capernaum was Jesus' own city.

It is usually a man's lot to live in various places, but there will be one which is his choice and to which his heart is given. Jesus was born in Bethlehem; He was educated in Nazareth; He was crucified in Jerusalem; in none of those arrangements had He any voice. For three years or so He could arrange His life as He pleased, and His first act of freedom on the threshold of His great career, was to fix upon the sphere of His labour and the centre from which He would evangelise it. Three places already competed for His favour, and each made its own appeal. He might have fixed His home in the wilderness of Judea whither John Baptist had drawn the people and made them ready for the kingdom. Here, where Jesus had accepted the guilt of the people, He might have saved them; where He had conquered Satan He might have cast Satan out. But Jesus had no love for what was repulsive and inhuman — the desert and the wild beast. Dear to our Master was the sight of human faces, and the works of men, and the sound of children's voices, and the softness of Nature. It would seem as if Jerusalem was determined beforehand to be the city of Jesus, — as indeed in the end it was to be His by the conquest of the Cross — for out of Jerusalem a prophet

could hardly perish, and there had the chief prophets declared the Will of God. Here was surely the vantage ground from which the new voice could reach the ends of the Jewish world; here were the men who could understand the new message and be its fit apostles. On the other hand, it is plain that Jesus would really have had no opportunity in the capital and would have had every one against Him—the priests whose interests He touched, the Pharisees whose doctrines He did not hold, and the Romans who were suspicious of every reference to a kingdom. It was inevitable that He should be persecuted; it was certain that He would be put to death, but He must have a space wherein to sow His seed, and that He could not have in Judea. Nazareth, again, had none of the dangers of the capital, and it had been His home for thirty years. Here in the bosom of the hills, far from the bigotry of Jerusalem and the ferment of the towns, He might lay the foundations of His society. But it is not always an advantage to be among your own people, and Jesus did not desire a secluded village for His first effort. For His mission was needed a town undominated by the capital, in touch with a large population, with an open-minded people. Capernaum fulfilled every condition, and Jesus chose it for His own city.

For the Master and His work, as the Evangelist of the Divine Love, it was not the least advantage that by general consent the Lake of Galilee was by far the loveliest spot in the Holy Land, so that the rabbis had a saying, "The land has seven seas, but Gennesaret God made for himself." Twelve miles long and rather more than seven at its widest, shaped like a lyre, and broken as to its shores into many curves and little headlands, with blue water and white sand, the Lake of Galilee lay amid its sloping green hills a vision of peace and beauty. On the eastern side the ground rose in billows of green, cut by ravines into the wilderness, where Jesus went for solitude and where He spent so many hours of intimate communion with God. Between the hills and the lake

on the western side lay the Plain of Gennesaret, than which there was no more fertile spot in the world. In this garden, watered by mountain streams and rich in volcanic soil, Nature, Josephus declares, had outdone herself, casting aside for once her limitations of place and season and revelling in the very license of production, for the walnut, the palm, the olive and the vine grew side by side, and for ten months out of the twelve fruit could be found in Gennesaret. All Galilee was, in those happy days, a land of streams and fountains, of woods and flowers, and the very heart thereof was the Lake of Tiberias. While the desert of Judea, with its arid sands, suggested the austerity of life, the valleys of Galilee, smiling with corn, were a parable of the gladness of life. It was fitting that the Baptist should thunder repentance amid a scene of desolation; it was fitting that Jesus should proclaim the excellent grace of the Kingdom of Heaven with a background of beauty.

Galilee had this further attraction for the Master, that it was not only blessed by Nature, but also crowded with people. Some fifteen towns lay on the shores of the lake, prosperous and stirring with life, making an almost continuous line of human homes. The lake was never without the sails of a fishing boat or the glitter of a royal galley. Along her great west road, called the Way by the Sea, came caravans from Damascus to Greece; down her south road went droves of camels to Egypt, and her innumerable byways were crowded with many feet in that most populous of provinces. The stir of the Gentile world was felt in Galilee; her own life was bright and strenuous. If the Galileans had a provincial accent, like a western man in New York, or a Lancashire man in London, and if they were ignorant of the refinements of theological culture in which Jerusalem delighted, they were quicker and keener than the Judeans. They were less held by conventionalities, and less fettered by prejudices; they were more open and enthusiastic; they were nearer the heart of things. When

Jesus began His ministry in Galilee, He laid His hand on the living pulse of the nation and of the world.

As some centre was needed from which the Master could go out on His missionary journeys, Jesus chose the village of Capernaum, and there He was more or less resident during His Galilean ministry. Round this town, whose very site is doubtful, gathers an affectionate interest, and so many were the incidents that happened here that one can reconstruct His Capernaum from the Gospels, till its streets be familiar ground, and we know its houses at sight. Here is the modest little synagogue, which the Roman officer in command of the local garrison built as a mark of respect for the Jewish religion — whose excellency he had discovered beneath its crust of fanatical bigotry; and as a testimony of his own faith in God — to whose knowledge he had come through the Hebrew Scriptures. Yonder are the quarters where his servant lay sick, and whence he sent the message which won so high approval from Jesus. It was in this synagogue that Jesus cast out a devil one Sabbath, and, later on, delivered His great discourse on Everlasting Life. Upon the outskirts stood the opprobrium of Capernaum, and the object of undying Jewish hate — a Roman custom house; and here any day you might see Levi receiving taxes from those who journeyed along the Way of the Sea, and there, within stone's throw, is his private house, where one day he assembled his friends together, all fellow outcasts from society, and entertained Jesus at a feast in celebration of his new life. If we go to the other end of Capernaum, where live the magnates of the little community, we are still in the Gospels, for that is the house of Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, where Jesus raised a little maid from death and filled the house with gladness; and on the other side of the street is the imposing residence of Simon the Pharisee, wh[illegible] Jesus was treated with such cold courtesy, and Mary Magdal[illegible] [illegible]ntered into peace. This again is only a street of poor homes, [illegible]t yet it is memo-

rable, and cannot be passed by, for it was here that four faithful souls lifted the roof of a house and laid their sick friend at Jesus' feet; and the woman lived who touched the hem of Jesus' garment and was healed. Near to the shore is the dwelling of Simon Peter, where Jesus was a guest, and at whose door the sick of Capernaum were gathered one evening for His blessing, and here is the very place where the people stood while Jesus preached from a boat moored a little distance from the shore. Upon that lake Jesus walked, and Peter went to meet him; through one of its sudden, dangerous storms Jesus lay asleep in the boat; from its waters came the miraculous draught of fishes, and on its shore the Master showed Himself after the Resurrection.

Never in the history of religion has any place had such privileges as Capernaum. For two years the Master lived among its people, homely and accessible, easy to be entreated and friendly with all. They could hear Him in the synagogue or in the open air; they could speak with Him on the street or in His lodgings. There was no kind of mighty work He did not perform in Capernaum; there was no sorrow He did not compassionate. Never could the power and love of God have been brought so near human hearts as in this favoured place. And it would not be true to say that Jesus laboured in vain, for from this place and neighbourhood He drew His Apostles; and here He found some of His most loyal friends. It remains, however, undeniable and most lamentable that the desire of Jesus' heart was not fulfilled, and that He bade farewell to the towns of the lake with a sense of disappointment and a confession of failure. Galilee had given the Master a cordial hearing, and surrounded Him with enthusiasm, and afforded Him apostles, but Galilee as a whole had not believed in Him nor cast in its lot with His kingdom; only a few had heard the Divine call and obeyed; the rest had been as the shallow soil, wherein the seed springs up quickly, and then as quickly withers away. So it came to pass that Galilee rejected

Jesus, through fickleness, as Jerusalem was to crucify Him through bigotry; and the guilt of Galilee was the greater. As Jesus thought of the day of salvation given unto the cities of the lake and their foolishness, He lifted up His voice in sorrow and indignation, "Woe unto thee, Chorazin!" "Woe unto thee, Bethsaida!" and then as He looked on the city that He had made His own by His choice and labour, bathed in the light of the setting sun, His voice takes a deeper note, "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained unto this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee."

SITE OF BETHSAIDA ON THE LAKE OF GALILEE

Chapter XIII: The Rejection of Nazareth

BETWEEN the outgoing of Jesus from Nazareth, when He went to the baptism of John, and His home-coming, when He returned to Nazareth from Capernaum, there were, possibly, only a few months in time, but there was an incalculable difference in life. He left with the recent conviction of the Messiahship, and He returned with the open witness of God to His call. He left with the sense of latent power, He returned with the sanction of mighty works. The spiritual impulses and heavenly dreams of youth—the blossoms of spring—had come to fruit, and His mysterious aloofness, as of one living here in disguise, had been vindicated. At the quiet hour of noon when He rested from labour, or in the evening as He wandered on the hillside above the village, He had imagined the outer world and the work before Him. Now He came down from the glory of the capital, and up from the stir of Capernaum, having laid His hand to God's work, and not having been put to confusion. It was not possible that He could be elated, for from the day of His baptism to the day of His crucifixion He was the lovliest in all the land; nor could He be free from a certain sad anticipation, Who already knew that He would be rejected

by the rulers of His people. Still it was with a just sense of His new position that He revisited the scenes of His youth, and the one desire in His heart was to confer that blessing with which He was charged, and which had already made glad Capernaum.

Notwithstanding the lamentable scene that was to take place in the synagogue, we may believe that on the Friday evening, as Jesus came up the village street, His fellow townsmen regarded His return with kindly interest. It has to be accepted as a lamentable fact that the perplexity of dull minds, which cannot appreciate spiritual genius near at hand, hindered His own family from believing on Him, and that religious bigotry in the end turned the hearts of His fellow citizens against Him; but it is not credible that Jesus could have lived for thirty years in Nazareth, going out and in among His fellow-men, even with all the reserves of those days, without being marked and loved. If in His youth He worked no miracles, He had the heart to sympathise with suffering; and if He preached no discourse, He must have dropped sayings which were treasured in some pious hearts. Nor is it possible that of all in Nazareth, however uncouth, dull and unspiritual the little town may have been, none anticipated His greatness. Even in Nazareth there must have been a few discerning souls—His teacher of the synagogue, a fellow scholar brighter than his class, some aged saint with whom he had conversed on spiritual things, a friend of later years, like the young men of Galilee—who were not astonished when the news of His appearances in Capernaum reached the highland town, and who went that memorable Sabbath morning to the synagogue with a high hope.

It is not possible to exaggerate the position of the synagogue in a village like Nazareth, and its nearest parallel may be found in that land which has copied so much from the Jewish

Church, and into whose character so much of the Jewish strength has been woven. As the traveller passes through some rural parish in Scotland, he will notice in some sheltered place, facing the sun, a clump of buildings which are withered with age, and have a certain simple dignity. They are the kirk and the manse, the school and schoolmaster's house, with God's acre round the kirk, and this is the heart and brain of the parish. It is here that the people have learned all they know of this world and the next; here that they are bound by their freedom and the graves of their fathers to the generations which are gone, by their children and the Resurrection of the Lord to the generations to come; here that they have been made intelligent men and sturdy patriots, and believing Christians; here that they realise their unity, and their duties, and their fellowship as part of a religious and political commonwealth. The Jewish synagogue was not picturesque, but that was the service it also rendered to its community. Under its shadow the children were taught to read and to know their one literature, the Sacred Writings. Within it, on Sabbath, old and young met to worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It kept in their remembrance the glorious history of Israel, and sustained them against the misfortunes of the present. The elders of the synagogue were the magistrates of the district, and expulsion from this place was expatriation from the nation: into this place gathered the life of the people, and the synagogue was the strength and expression of the Jewish common life.

The synagogue of Nazareth would be a plain and homely building standing north and south, with likely three doors, and, it might be, three aisles. The men and women would sit apart, the most distinguished in front, while the younger and poorer were behind, so that in Nazareth Jesus first saw from His obscure place the unholy scramble for "chief seats." Nothing

could be simpler than the fittings of the synagogue: a platform and reading-desk for the reader, and a chest for the Sacred Writings. The service opened by what was called the Shema, and may be described as a creed, beginning with the noble words, "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." The prayers followed, which some one led from the front of the chest, wherein lay the Law, and the congregation responded. A section of the Law was then read—the whole reading of the Pentateuch was completed in three years—and then a portion from the Prophets, which the reader could choose where he pleased. After the reading some one gave an address in which the Scripture read was explained and applied, and the benediction was pronounced by a priest. Over the synagogue an officer called the ruler presided, and another, who is described as the minister, had charge of the Scriptures. The whole constitution of the synagogue was an admirable illustration of a strong and free democracy, where there were officers to secure order and administer justice, and yet every member of the commonwealth had his share in the public service and a regulated liberty of utterance.

With this place Jesus had many sacred associations and He could not that Sabbath morning enter it without a tender heart. In His childhood He had been taken here by His mother and Joseph; in His youth He had heard in this place those Prophets which had so affected His mind. As He came to full manhood He would seek here for that deeper meaning which was as yet hidden from the people and was only beginning to break on Him. One may reasonably believe that as Jesus used to listen to the commonplace and weary exposition of some rabbi He would imagine that happy day when a preacher after the type of the ancient prophets, should appear in their midst and make known unto the congregation the mind of God, and no

doubt the impulse was often strong within Him to declare the thoughts which were burning in His heart. He restrained Himself and remained silent; and now He was to speak that day in the synagogue of His childhood and of His mother, —not as any villager might if he pleased, but with the reputation of a prophet; so that as soon as He had read the second lesson "the eyes of all were fastened upon Him." As He could read where and what He pleased from the Prophets, Jesus selected the description of the Messiah and His work from the book of Isaiah:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

This was the beautiful and heavenly hope which had visited the Prophets: that amid the kingdoms which stood in brute force and merciless violence, in pride and iniquity, one should arise in God's time whose glory would be Humility and Pity, Holiness and Peace. For centuries this idea had been only a dream, and men had begun to conclude that it was too good to be true and now, in the village synagogue of Nazareth, Jesus declared that it had come. Here was laid down in inspired vision the programme of His own religion, which was to be for the poor, and the sad, and the sinner, and the simple, and the hopeless, for all the people who were crippled and ill-used and cast down and helpless in this world's fight.

Various happy circumstances conspired to commend the address of Jesus, and for the moment to win the suffrages of His audience. In spite of spiritual stupidity and Pharisaic pedantry it did count for something that the Prophets had been read in the synagogues and that the people were familiar with their

Messianic conception. The soil might be shallow and unclean, but some seed had been dropped in and was bound to appear above ground. Every Jew had also been grounded in the character of God; and however the fair proportions had been clouded over by racial and theological prejudice, yet he believed in the "Lord God merciful and gracious." Between this God and this kingdom of mercy there was a convincing and inspiring correspondence, so that if any Kingdom of God was going to be established on earth it would be after this fashion. Besides this new state had already given in that very synagogue a pledge of its success, and that was in its appeal to the needs of men. Its constituents and subjects are already there in that poor family hiding themselves in the back of the synagogue, in that widow who has just lost the husband of her youth, in that lad whom Satan torments, in the sightless eyes of that old man, in the vacant face of that girl, in the droop of that head which tells of dreary failure. And the Prophet's words are already confirmed and almost realised by the personality of the speaker, Who, sitting there before them in His grace and purity, speaks as a king from his throne. A sudden wave of spiritual emotion swept over the congregation, and carried them away in a joyful enthusiasm. They turned one to another demanding and receiving consent, and from every part of the synagogue broke forth cries of thankfulness and admiration. Nazareth bare open witness to the gracious words Jesus spake; it was His brief moment of acceptance in the village of His youth.

Then, as the shallow water of an inland lake is suddenly lashed into a storm by a gust of wind from some ravine, the scene within the synagogue changed from rejoicing to hatred. The people of Nazareth had been so moved by the spiritual effect of Jesus that they had for the time forgotten His circumstances. As He spake of the Messianic salvation He had been, as it were, transfigured before them, and their eyes had been dazzled.

When the excitement cooled, they began to look facts in the face, and ask questions. It was a magnificent passage and a wonderful exposition; but what of the Preacher Who was to accomplish these mighty works, and claimed to be anointed of God unto that end? If He had come from some secret place like Elijah, or even from the wilderness like the Baptist, their poor human nature, which is ever impressed by the unknown, might have asked no questions. But it was His misfortune (their good fortune) to have lived among these people, so that they knew everything about Him, from the colour of His eyes to the shop where He worked. One had been a maiden friend of Mary; another had wrought at the same bench with Joseph; a third lived next door to Jesus' brother; a fourth had in his house a piece of this Man's handiwork. The Messiah, one who might have been seen any day working in a carpenter's shed, with whom they have often spoken on village affairs, the son of two worthy villagers of the poorer class, what absurdity! and, mark you, what presumption also! And now what did they see in the high place of the synagogue? A carpenter whose head was turned,—that now and nothing more.

It is one of the ironies of life which is ever being repeated, that a prophet has no honour in his own country. Strangers from other lands come to visit the country parish where a poet lives, and carry away flowers from the hedgerows which surround his home, but his neighbours have no interest in his greatness, and tell stupid stories about his habits. The outside world envies the family of some good man because they have the privilege of his company from morning to night, but they themselves treat him with scant respect, and have no sympathy with his visions. This may mean that the poet is really a petty person, and the saint only a weakling; but it may also mean that familiarity with greatness has blunted the sense of admiration, and that which is a wonder unto many is in the minds of those who are

nearest to it a very common thing. An innumerable multitude of the wisest of our race would have given their treasures to have seen Jesus for an hour and had converse with Him; but He lived thirty years in Nazareth, and declared to his fellow townsmen the richness of the Messianic hope, and the end of it was they said, "Is not this the carpenter's son?"

The synagogue which, a short while ago, had echoed with cries of appreciation was filled with contempt and suspicion, and, amid the confused murmurs that floated up to Him, Jesus caught another complaint. Nazareth had heard of the mighty works He had wrought in Capernaum on His first Sabbath there, and it was natural that they should have expected to see like wonders in their town. What He did for this strange place Jesus was bound to do for His own folk, not of grace but of duty. Yet the day was passing, and no sick one had been healed; and they laid the blame on Jesus, understanding not that the hindrance was not in Him but in them. They imagined that because they were of Nazareth they had a right to His miracles; but He must remind them that they were only wrought in an atmosphere of faith, and that the Divine mercy was not confined even to Jews but rested gladly on believing Gentiles. Elijah was a fiercely Jewish prophet, and yet he was sent to the widow of Sarepta, though there were many widows in Israel. Elisha was his son in the succession, and yet it was Naaman the Syrian he healed, though there were many lepers in Israel. What He might have done in Nazareth they could not imagine; but notwithstanding that brief paroxysm of devotion, their attitude was one of criticism and unbelief; and while Jesus would save distant peoples, of whom they had never heard, for Nazareth He could do nothing. It was then that the evil spirit of this turbulent village burst into uncontrollable and senseless fury. They surrounded Him before the chest of the Scriptures, wherein lay the prophecy of His coming; they hustled Him from the synagogue, where He had

preached His Evangel; they dragged Him through the town which had seen His holy youth; they brought Him to a rocky height, from which He had often looked down in past years; and then, had it depended on the men of Nazareth, the career of Jesus had there ended. But once again His august personality asserted itself, and the rabble, which had done homage to His grace, fell back before His awful Majesty. Jesus passed through their midst, and departed, and this was His farewell to Nazareth.

Chapter XIV: Heretics of Samaria

IT could not be said with any truthfulness that the attitude of a Jew towards a Gentile was cordial, but it was friendly and affectionate compared with his feelings towards a Samaritan, whom he regarded with persistent and virulent hatred. As often as the Jews met for worship in the former times they cursed the Samaritans, so that they also had their creed, in which uncharitableness was raised to a virtue, and a hereditary enmity was inflamed. No Samaritan was allowed to give evidence in a Jewish court of justice, so that his position as a man was that of a slave, and, worse than that, of a criminal. When a Jew desired to express his dislike to any man with whose theology he did not agree he called him a Samaritan—just as religious people of our day are apt to call any teacher a Unitarian who does not hold their theory of the atonement—by which the Jews did not mean to say that the teacher had been born in Samaria, but only that he was a heretic, which was quite as bad. This nickname was the handiest (and sharpest) road metal with which to strike him; it was the most opportune name with which to bring him into contempt, and it is a supreme illustration of the principle of religious abuse as well as a very

pathetic circumstance, that our Master, Who was of pure Jewish blood, and Who was filled with the noblest spirit of Jewish religion, was called a Samaritan by the Jewish persecutors and was said to have a devil.

This passion of hatred on the part of the Jew against the Samaritan had two reasons, and the first, which indeed can only by courtesy be called a reason, appears to have been that the Samaritan was extremely like a Jew, and there is no person whom the average man so intensely dislikes as the person who is of other blood and yet claims kinship. A stranger he may regard with suspicion; this impudent neighbour he will denounce as an impostor. According to their own account of themselves, the Samaritans were the representatives of the Ten Tribes, the descendants of the few Jews who may have been left in the northern kingdom when their brethren were expatriated, and of those who found their way back from exile. Perhaps a Samaritan might not contend that his blood was absolutely pure, without any foreign admixture, but he prided himself on a strain of Jewish blood so undoubted and decided that he was entitled to call himself a Jew, and to include himself in the Mosaic covenant. According to the Jewish account, every one of his brethren of the Ten Tribes had been deported into heathendom and had disappeared, and the places of the exiles had been taken by a pack of Gentiles brought from the East; and therefore the later inhabitants of Samaria lay under this double stigma, that they had not a single drop of blood which was not base and alien, and that they were usurpers in the place of the seed of Abraham. There was here material for fruitful and perennial controversy—a hot spring of evil feeling. Suppose that two families, of (practically) the same name, live near one another in a town, one rich and in society, the other poor and out of society, then it will simply depend on one circumstance whether or not there

be trouble. If the plebeians know their place and never claim to be in the remotest degree connected with the patricians in this community of name and residence, then the patricians will, if it be necessary to make any reference, speak with condescension and charity of their less-favored namesakes. But if those outsiders give out that they are cadets of the same house, who simply have fallen on evil days, then the mind of the patricians will be entirely changed. They will be careful to let it be known that these other people are simply upstarts and will take every opportunity of denouncing them and all their works. If you desire to insult the original stock, all you have to do is to refer to their pseudo-relatives. The Samaritans posed as the poor relations of the Jewish race, and, as the Jews declared with much emphasis, were unknown and disreputable strangers.

There was another and more tangible reason for enmity, and that was not racial but geographical. The Samaritans had set themselves down in the very centre of the Holy Land, and in a rich and picturesque province, so that the country was split as with a wedge by these alien intruders, and its continuity was broken. The Galilean coming up to worship at Jerusalem on the great feasts must needs go through Samaria, or make a long détour by the Jordan. As a matter of fact the Galileans took the nearest road, and, as may be imagined, there was much friction between the Jewish pilgrims and the heretic inhabitants. The Samaritans had the power to make it pleasant or unpleasant for travellers, and it was perhaps human that they were apt to make the journey anything but pleasant for Jews. So strained indeed were the relations that the paramount eastern law of hospitality was disregarded, and the stranger was left without food or water. One has a vivid illustration of the state of feeling when Jesus and His disciples were refused meat by a Samaritan villager, and His two hottest disciples, realis-

ing that a good opportunity for paying back old scores had come at last, wished to call down fire from Heaven on the churlish people. The sin of a strong man is tyranny, and the sin of a little man is spite; and the Samaritans did certain mean and vexatious injuries to the Jews. It was the patriotic custom of the home Jews to light a fire on a hill near Jerusalem at Passover time, and other Jews passed the signal from hill to hill, till the beacon flashed on distant cities; and distant Jews, eating out their hearts in exile, knew that the feast of deliverance was being kept in the capital, and that the Dispersion had been remembered. The bitterest enemy might well have sympathised with this touching act and allowed it to pass, but it was the cause of just indignation among the Jews that the Samaritans would, out of pure wickedness, light false fires on their hills and throw the anxious exiles into hopeless confusion. And so the Jew hated the Samaritan, and the Samaritan returned the hatred with interest.

When Jesus began His mission, the Samaritans were one of the problems He had to face, and His solution is an example to the Christian Church in every age. It was impossible for Jesus to ignore the Samaritans—they were too much in evidence and too insistent; it was not expedient for Him to include Samaria in His work — He must confine Himself to Israel: but it was possible and almost imperative that as a prophet He should state His mind on Samaria, and as the Founder of the Church should declare the relation of His Church to heretics, for Samaria is ever with us. His attitude to the individual Samaritan was one of characteristic kindness; and it is to be remembered that friendliness to the heretic of your own community is, of all forms of charity, the most difficult and hazardous. Yet Jesus goes out of His way to say a good word for this detested people, and to place them higher even than the Jews; for in one of His most persuasive parables it is the priest and the Le-

vite — classical types of Jewish orthodoxy — who pass the wounded traveller by, and a Samaritan who saves his life; and so the word Samaritan, which in the mouth of a Jew was synonymous with Devil, has by this single touch of Jesus become, through the modern world, another name for Philanthropist. So keenly did Jesus feel the scorn and contempt cast on these unfortunates that He was ever on the outlook to vindicate their character and give them credit; and so when He points out that of ten lepers whom He healed, one only gave thanks, He is careful to add, "And he was a Samaritan." Between these national and ecclesiastical outcasts and Jesus there was indeed a pathetic kinship, for He was called by their name, and suffered more than their curse.

After His fashion of Divine simplicity the deliverance of our Master on the heretics of Samaria was given, as it were by accident, to a woman on whose kindness Jesus cast Himself at the Well of Sychar. He began by asking water of her from Jacob's well, and He ended by offering her to drink of the water of life; but before they parted He had laid down two positions, which are ever to be kept in mind because they are full of light and charity. The first is this: that the Samaritans as well as the Jews are also the children of the one Father. So many of His children worshipped at Jerusalem, and so many at Mount Gerizim; those at Jerusalem had a fuller Bible and richer privileges; but the fact that the Samaritans had not been so favoured as the Jews was no reason to suppose that God was indifferent to them, and no ground on which to ill-treat them. Jesus did not despise the Samaritans because He was born a Jew — less would He have persecuted them: His attitude was pity and help. If one has eyes to see, let him thank God. Why, in the name of God and Reason, should he rail at his poor brother who is blind? and why should he wish to push him over the precipice? After all, beneath all diversities of race

and creed lies the deeper unity of the human brotherhood and the Divine Fatherhood. Very soon the slight distinctions between Samaria and Jerusalem would pass away and be forgotten in the wider faith and more spiritual worship of which Jesus was the Teacher. Jesus' own spirit was to dissolve all barriers by raising the children of His Heavenly Father to that level where men forget racial and theological feuds in spiritual fellowship with God. Like other schismatics, the Samaritans were the witnesses to some unrecognised truth, and in their case it was the comprehensive breadth of the family and Church of God.

At the same time Jesus distinctly laid it down that the Samaritans had suffered great loss in being separated from the Jews. They had the Law, and therein they were rich; they had not the Prophets, and therein they were poor. They worshipped the true God, but they knew not what they worshipped. God the Lawgiver was theirs — the Jehovah of Moses — not God the Redeemer, the God of Isaiah. That poor unfortunate with whom Jesus spoke knew enough Law to be condemned and ashamed. She knew not the Divine grace of the first and fifty-third chapters of Isaiah to be comforted and saved. In this way of it salvation was of the Jews, and it is also of the Church Catholic. This is that body of people which holds the Fatherhood of God, and the Deity of His Son Jesus Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, the victory over sin by the Cross and the Life everlasting; and the only heretics worth the name are those who somehow or other have lost the heart of this Faith. Is it not the case that the Catholic Church has had a strength of faith, a fire of zeal, and a gladness of hope not given to the others? The Jews had Mount Sion, the Samaritans had only Mount Sinai, and yet the Samaritans, without any prophets, were waiting for the Messiah. "When He cometh," said this outcast of Samaria, "He will tell us all things"; and

to her He revealed Himself as He would not to the rulers of the Jews, for He said, without veil or parable, "I am He." Truly, as the woman said, the "well is deep," and buckets of human creeds and theologies bring up little water, and often much earth, but He is a hand Who giveth unto every simple soul the water of Everlasting Life.

Chapter XV: Jesus and the Nations

WHEN we remember how many Jesus teaches to-day, Whose words have gone forth unto the ends of the world, when we see in how many lands He is known Who is now a citizen of every civilised nation, it is with an effort we realise how few He addressed in His lifetime, how narrow were the borders of His ministry. His Cross has already conquered the West; it is laying claim to the East: Jesus' own farthest journey was to the frontiers of Tyre and Sidon, which He would not pass. Daily millions call upon His name and study His Word, but He was Himself known only as a Galilean teacher of doubtful reputation, and His perfect sayings were given to a handful of peasants in a room or on a highway. The most acute intellects of eighteen centuries have been studying His words and setting them in the light of their best learning, but Jesus Himself had never attended the schools of Jerusalem, and was looked upon as an uneducated person. His spirit has created the letters and art of modern times, but He never possessed a book, and never had seen a picture. Without books, without learning, with no associates but fishermen and tax-gatherers, within the frontiers of a single province and the most

straitened circumstances, Jesus fulfilled His calling, and did His eternal work.

Had Jesus been only a Jewish prophet, necessarily confined to His own people by the form of His message, like His forerunner, John Baptist, one could understand at once why He never crossed the borders of His own people, nor made His venture in the greater world. But one wonders sometimes why a prophet—the most unfettered in His teaching, and the most universal in His sympathies—after He had made proof of His power, and after He had been refused by His people, did not go forth to the Gentiles, as St. Paul was to do afterwards with Jesus' own sanction, and with high success. And one speculates what would have happened if Jesus had Himself carried His sublime doctrine of God and man to Athens and Rome; if He had cast Himself on the intelligence and generosity of the pagans who, in Jewry, had never despised or hated Him. The Jews sent Him to a cross in His own land, and therein unwilling Gentiles were their servants. Would not the Gentiles, in their own cities, have given Him the only kingdom He desired, the homage of human souls? And why, with so excellent a promise, did He give the Gentiles no opportunity of acknowledging Him King of Truth?

It is evident that from the beginning of His work His life plan was settled in Jesus' mind, and that it was of its very essence to confine Himself to the Holy Land. Although He must needs go through Samaria on His journeys between Galilee and Jerusalem, He only once had any intercourse with this mongrel people, and in their experimental mission His disciples were instructed to avoid the Samaritans. Although He worked in the near neighbourhood of imposing Gentile cities, it is never written that Jesus entered Tiberias or Sepphoris; and while a stream of Gentile life ran past Him in Galilee, He stood apart. He had a good reason for His course of action. It was by this

isolation from the greater world, and this devotion to His own people, He could best accomplish His task. For, according to Jesus' mind, He had not come to evangelise the world, but to provide that Gospel which His apostles would preach, to train them in His thoughts and methods, to illustrate His teaching by His example, and to seal and verify it by His death. Within Jewry, as in a nursery, the seed was to be grown which afterwards would be scattered broadcast in the fields of the world, and at Jerusalem was Jesus' cross to be the gate of life to the whole race.

None can study Jesus' life without being convinced that, if He chose, for certain reasons, to remain within Palestine, His religion could not be so confined. It was Jewish in origin—that was a historical development: it was humane in spirit—that was its very glory. His first disciples might be Jews, the disciples to follow must be Gentiles. There are forms of vegetation which belong inevitably to certain zones: they would die elsewhere. But the mind is free, and Jesus' religion, in its spirituality, freshness, force, and unconquerable freedom, was the very mind of God. What a contrast to the Jewish faith and worship, with its temple, its feasts, its rites, its sacrifices, its traditions, its bigotries, its exclusiveness. Of all that ritual, pedantry, provincialism, and formalism Jesus adopted not one shred. Instead of the temple of stone and gold the heart was to be God's dwelling place; instead of the sacrifices of fed beasts, was to be the surrender of the life to God; instead of innumerable rites, was to be the one commandment of Love. Jesus commanded no holy day, no priest, no rites, except two beautiful signs. Our Master seized the spiritual element which underlies all religions, and raised it to the highest power. What He asked could be performed in all lands; what He taught was the answer to the instinct in every breast. His Gospel was raised beyond the limits of creeds and customs; it might

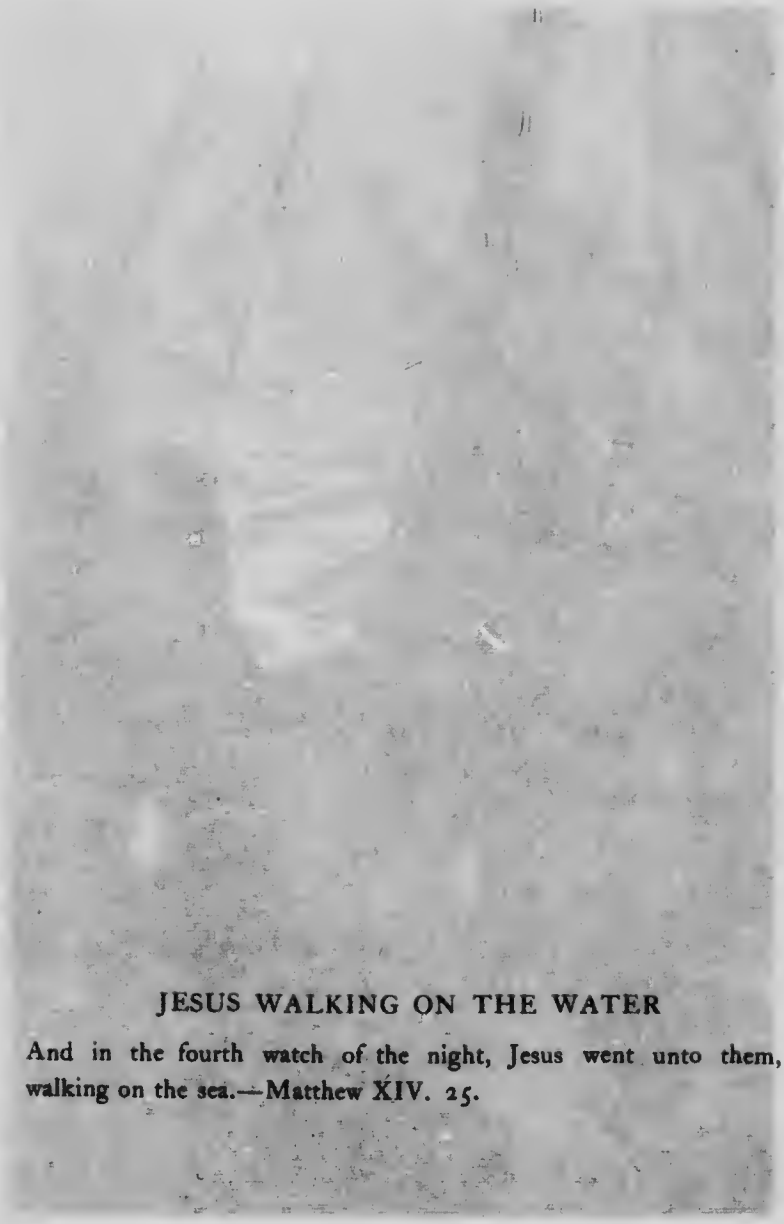
be dated from Jewry; it was coeval with, coterminous with, the race.

Jesus Himself, while He moved in so narrow and uncongenial a place, yet looked abroad and had great visions. If He did not separate Himself from His people, nor despise their worship, He assumed from the beginning that His new society was not to be a Jewish sect, a new Samaritan schism. He had vast ambitions, and foresaw splendid triumphs. So early as His interview with Nicodemus He had begun to speak of the "world" which His Father loved, and for which He was to die. Unto the Samaritan woman He spoke of the day at hand when people would be confined neither to this Church or that, but everywhere worship the Father. Before His townsmen at Nazareth He glories in the fact that the Divine Mercy had, in the ancient time, rested on pagans, and that He had come, not on a national and ecclesiastical, but on a human errand. If His Word be as seed which is going to be sown, then the field is to be the world; and if His Kingdom was at the beginning to be as a mustard seed, in the end it would be a tree in which the birds of the air would take refuge. When the invited guests, near and privileged neighbours, despised the feast then the King's messengers would go out into the highways and hedges and find a company; and Jesus saw them coming from the East and the West, and the North and the South, and sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in His Kingdom. His last discourses on the eve of crucifixion have the universal note, and after the resurrection He commanded that His Gospel should be preached to every creature. If Jesus did not go to the Gentiles, He had the nations in His heart; and if His centre was Palestine, His horizon was the world.

It were a mistake, however, to assume that because the Master did not go abroad like His apostles, nor throw Himself into Gentile society, that He had no personal contact with the

nations, for He met on as many interesting occasions, with the three chief types of the outer world: with the Barbarian, the Roman, and the Greek; and three times His heart was filled with hope and joy. It happened that after an encounter with certain Pharisees, who had come down from Jerusalem to harass and entrap Him, Jesus, wearied with their hypocrisy and the heartless formality of His own people, left Galilee and came to the frontiers of Tyre and Sidon. His fame had penetrated to the pagan inhabitants and reached the ears of a woman who was a child of nature, just as the Jews with their traditions were children of custom. She belonged to the original Canaanite stock, which, in spite of all early attempts at extirpation, remained in the land and were the aboriginal race. She would have no religion and very little civilisation; in her humanity would be reduced to its elements—half a dozen passions, and the one which governed her at the moment was love. She was a mother, as is suggested by her intensity, with an only child, and, as is suggested by her loneliness, a widow, and her daughter was the saddest of all sufferers. This child, in whom her affections were bound up, and to save whom from pain she would have laid down her life, was sick, not in body but in mind. There be many parents who would rather see a child dead than insane, and this miserable child was a maniac. The mother heard of Jesus' miracles of mercy; her ears were quick to catch any rumour of hope for her child. She set out to find the Master, Who placed Himself within her reach; His life was full of arranged accidents. She inquired carefully how this Healer ought to be addressed; He was not particular, if so be there was a break in the voice. She described her child's state with words which might move a heart of stone—"my daughter . . . grievously vexed with a devil." Was not that eloquence? And she cast that tormented creature on the compassion of Jesus. It was an outburst of that love and

trust which underlie all religions and all civilisations, and one had expected an immediate response from Jesus. With Him faith as a grain of mustard seed was enough, and a mother's petition was law; but this mother Jesus seemed to treat hardly. There were those He went out to welcome: this suppliant He seemed to repel; but His reason was not a reflection but an honour. He saw, indeed, that her capacity for faith was immense, since love was feeding the fire, and He would fan it into flame, that the world might know how a pagan could believe. So He put her faith to three trials, rising in severity, and the first was silence. She prayed with all her might; He gave no sign that He had heard. She remembered a certain poor, distorted face, and she would not be silent. Next He allowed His disciples to discourage her, as they would have driven many from the Master. "Send her away," they said; "she is troublesome with her cries." Fastidious men, but they had not heard a maniac's cry. She had, and neither John nor Peter must come between her and Jesus. Persistent woman, whom no disciple could discourage, who even believed that the disciples were no index to the Master, and who dared to hope that the Master might grant what the disciples refused. So the faith of this Canaanite grew the stronger through repulses and invited harder trials. Jesus Himself now took this irrepressible mother in hand and did what He could to daunt her soul. He had not much practice in repelling suppliants: His experience has been inviting and drawing; but He makes a brave show. For the first time He opens His mouth to this stranger from Tyre, and for the moment He speaks with Jewish contempt. "It is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it unto dogs." Strange to hear such words from the Master's lips — that He should call any one a dog, and that one an agonised mother! Be sure that if she had been a weakling He had heard the slightest whisper, and would have an-



JESUS WALKING ON THE WATER

And in the fourth watch of the night, Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.—Matthew XIV. 25.

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swered her prayer while it was still on her lips. But this Gentile, who knew no creeds, was rich in faith: in her breast was a heart which heeded neither scorn nor rebuke. Her woman's wit was sharp that day, and seized the one advantage Jesus had afforded. Dog He had called her; then dog she would be: only she must have a dog's place and privileges. "When the family is gone and the room is empty, the houseless outcast of the streets may creep through the open door; when the children have had their plentiful meal, the starving creature may take the morsels they have cast away. Give me, Lord, the dog's portion, for the very refuse of this high table will be enough for me." Against such ingenious and pathetic pleading there was left no power of resistance in Jesus. Jesus could not be conquered by the sophistry of Pharisees, nor by the scourging of Roman soldiers, but once He was overcome and helpless, convicted out of His own mouth and forced to surrender. The victor, who plucked the laurels from the very heart of Jesus, was not a scholar nor a saint, only a heathen woman, strong in her sorrow and her love. Jesus had no reserve in His submission: He made no secret of His satisfaction. "Woman," He said with admiration, "great is thy faith"; and the afflicted mother, type of those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, went home rejoicing, for Jesus had fulfilled her heart's desire.

Jesus' second Gentile was of another kind. No ignorant and despised provincial, but a member of the imperial race which had given law and government to the world. All that the Canaanite knew was only the creed of nature—that if there be such sorrow as hers in the world, there must be some one to help. But the Roman centurion of Capernaum had come to understand that there must be an order in this universe with wills and forces, working in obedience and subordination; and that if any one should reach the ear of Cæsar, he could have his request. He

had also grasped the fact that while the Emperor's throne rested on the legions, the authority of the greater Cæsar would stand in righteousness. Already he had done homage to the Jewish religion as superior to his own, and he had come to think of Jesus as one at least of the supreme rulers of the spiritual world. When his body servant fell ill of that malarial fever which was the curse of the low-lying plain, and was in danger of death, this humane and loyal soldier, who was bound to his servant by the ties of faithful service and many perils, bethought himself of Jesus. As in any strait of military duty he had sent his petition to Rome; now, in this anxiety of life, he would lay his request at Jesus' feet. He will not ask the Master to come to his quarters because it were not fitting—the Lord Supreme in his poor house, because it were not needful—a word from the throne would be enough. "Only speak," this officer pleaded, "and my servant will be healed." So reasonable and intelligent was this faith, so buoyant and confident, that Jesus was arrested and astonished. It was one of the paradoxes of His life to be amazed both at the unbelief of His own people, and at the faith of the Gentiles. His disciples had believed, but not after this disciplined and stalwart fashion, and Jesus not only granted the centurion's prayer, but declared openly, with emphasis, that He had not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

Jesus' third interview with the Gentiles took place in Jerusalem, and within sight of His death. Certain Gentiles who had accepted the Jewish faith had come up to worship at Jerusalem, and they carried with them into their new religion the intellectual curiosity of either their Greek origin or environment, for the word Greek in the New Testament literature is ambiguous. Their desire was to see this new prophet who was so stirring Jewry, and whose fame had reached their home. When Jesus saw them, they were to His imagination

the vanguard of an army. The Gentile world, which loved knowledge and philosophy and culture and beauty, had sent an embassy to do homage; that world whose strength was sapped through luxury and pride and needed the salvation of sacrifice, was perishing for dearth of the Cross. The very sight of these Greeks filled the Master with hope and joy. The shadow of His approaching death had fallen on His soul, and He had been cast down. As a corn of wheat is flung into the ground this young life of His, with all its richness and power, was, as it seemed, to perish; but as a corn of wheat appeareth again in spring and changeth into a hundredfold, so would He live again. He had spoken and worked in Galilee and had been defeated: His hope and His consolation were at hand. Let His enemies have their way: let Him be raised on a cross: behold, His defeat was going to be His victory. Already the sun had begun to shine upon His Kingdom, and the Gentiles to come to the brightness of His rising.

Chapter XVI: Jesus and the Proletariat

IT ought to be frankly admitted that a few of the ruling class in Jesus' day were friendly to the Master: two of the Supreme Council, for instance, gave Him honourable burial. And it must be sadly admitted that the people, carried away at the end by a spirit of false patriotism, and misled by their rulers, clamoured for His crucifixion. With those qualifications it remains that Jesus did not associate, except on rare occasions, with the people who were rich and lived at ease, and held offices and bore authority, and that on their part this privileged order regarded the Master with suspicion and dislike. And it is an obvious and instructive fact that Jesus lived and moved and worked among the men who are poor, and toil hard, and have no place, and are ordered about, and that they regarded Him as one of themselves, and put their trust in Him. They crowded synagogues to hear Him; they followed Him into desert places; they brought Him their children to bless and their sick to heal; they called Him by the name dearest unto the people, Son of David; they encompassed Him with admiration; they were openly astonished at the wonderful things He said and did; they followed Him with enthusiasm, strewing their garments on the way, and shouting

Hosanna! In spite of the lamentable tragedy of Calvary, and the perplexity of the people with Jesus' spiritual doctrine, through all His public life as He moves along the ways of Galilee, the working folk, men and women, with their little ones, press on Him from every side, and escort Him, so that we see Him ever surrounded by honest, simple faces, and hear Him applauded in the speech of those who have known nothing of the schools. Whatever may be the case now, Jesus had the heart of the proletariat in Galilee.

When one inquires the reason why Jesus had more to say with the people than the priests of their faith, and more even than the leaders of patriotism, it is evident that the answer lies largely in Himself. If this Man, Who invited the people to come unto Him, and believe in Him, Who showed such quick sympathy with them in their straits and sufferings, was really indifferent to them—merely an eloquent orator or a sentimental friend—then He had been like certain in other ages, who have traded in philanthropy and exploited democracy for their own purposes, and His end would have been theirs. He might have had a brief day of popularity, and then in less than three years He would have been found out and cast out of the people's heart with hatred. Or if He had been cunning enough and showy enough to keep up the histrionic delusion on to the final tragedy, and die a stage martyr for the people, while He was simply a selfish man, whom it suited to side with the plebeians rather than with the patricians, then the readers of His Life would have detected the false note, and classed Jesus with the worst of traitors, who have betrayed not kings or confederacies, but the fond, credulous people. Of all who have served the people, Jesus offered the most convincing and unreserved pledges of sincerity, pledges which all the friends of the people cannot give, but which, if they can be afforded, are final.

One was His birth; for it is a fact of profound significance,

never to be belittled, that our Master did not come of the priestly or learned caste, nor was He the son of a capitalist or rich man. Whatever may be made by loyal disciples of His remote descent from David—and kings' cousins of the thousandth degree can be found in many places—He was really the son of a peasant girl, and in His veins ran the blood of working people. His childhood was spent in the humblest of houses—of one, or at the most two rooms. Before Him lay from the beginning the necessity of manual labour. He was accustomed to the self-denials, privations, calculations, and humiliations of a toiler's life. Each class in human society is to some degree a caste, with its own hindrances, sorrows, ideals, freemasonry. It is not possible for a man reared in a palace to understand the life of the cottage; it will always be to him a closed secret. When one of the better-off classes desires to help the people, he must first of all cleanse himself from all sorts of false ideas about them which he has inherited, marvellous romances of an unknown country which have crystallised into history, and then he must set himself to understand the people with the aid of blue-books and inquisitorial visits, as if the people were a poor, helpless, unconscious body laid on a table for strangers to handle and anatomise as they pleased. Jesus had not to study this working life; He had only to remember it, for He had lived within the circle. It was not His discovery, it was His experience.

It would be misleading, however, to lay too much stress on the mere circumstance of birth, for it does not close the question. Men of noble blood have often been the true friends and faithful servants of the people: witness Shaftesbury and Tolstoi. Men have sprung from their loins and have been their task-masters: witness many a lowly-born capitalist and sweater. Jesus gave its natural effect to His birth, and accepted its responsibility. By His own will and deliberate act He cast in His lot with the

people, and in their cause was faithful unto death. Had this not been His mind, He might have escaped shame and suffering. He could have gone apart and become a Jewish monk; then had He lived unmolested and died unnoticed. Or He might have come to terms with the religious classes, the Pharisaic bourgeoisie, and He would have ived a chief seat in the synagogue; or He might have obtained a place with the Herodian court party. Because He would not seek favour with the ruling classes, and because He would take the side of the people against their oppressors, He was persecuted and hunted to death.

It has also sometimes happened that a leader has undertaken the people's cause with all his heart who has been isolated from the people's life, but Jesus added sympathy to identity. He cannot speak without revealing His heart, and showing that He thought and felt with the labouring and heavily laden. His parables move, as a rule, in a circle of humble life, where a woman's dowry has been only ten pieces of silver, where the housemother bakes with three measures of meal, where the householder in a sudden emergency of hospitality begs bread of his neighbour, where the farmer toils with the bare ground of the hillside, where the labourers stand all day in the market place waiting to be hired, and a beggar lies at the rich man's door. When there are exceptions, and Jesus introduces us to palaces and great men's houses, it is with the mind of one coming from the outside. He describes a feast, but it is given to the poor; and an invitation, but it is sent to the highways and hedges. He is ever enforcing the duty of generosity to the poor, and He promises great rewards to such as deal kindly with them, declaring that whatsoever may be done to the poor has been done to Him. And He bitterly resents the supercilious and inhuman attitude of the Pharisees, who despised the people because they did not know theology, who

loaded them with heavy religious burdens, who closed against them the gate of God's kingdom, who left them as sheep without a shepherd. Jesus' discourses are not those of an advocate pleading with skill and conviction for the people—they are charged with personal indignation and a sense of injury, for the wrongs are His, and He also is despised.

Another pledge Jesus has given of His supreme claim to be the Guide and Saviour of the proletariat is the service He has rendered. For the Master did far more for the people than defend them against the annoyance of Pharisees and insist upon the duty of almsgiving: He put strength into the hearts of the people and made them men. What Moses did for the rabble of broken-spirited slaves he led out of Egypt, Jesus has wrought for the masses of the modern world. When He began His work, the people were ignorant, over-worked, down-trodden, voiceless, helpless, hopeless, in every civilised country of the empire. His words, His example, His Spirit, fermenting like leaven from generation to generation, have filled their minds with new ideas of manhood, with an increasing self-respect, with impatience of tyranny, with a passionate love of liberty. It was not the innumerable crowd of demagogues; some perhaps sincere—some evidently insincere—who imagined the idea of brotherhood, and taught it as a principle of life to the people.

Our Master first dared to call men sons of God, with the rights and duties of sonship, and to unite the race, without distinction of classes, as one family; and it was He who opened the gate of the kingdom of God to the most miserable and abject, and bade them enter in to claim their heritage. His imagination pictured to minds dulled by toil and oppression the Land of Promise and His spirit has sustained the millions at the base of society through all the struggles and weariness of the long wilderness journey. The people are not now, in any

Christian land, slaves; they are already the rulers, and the influence which has changed the face of society is the teaching of the Master. Many have prated of Equality, He has made Humanity; many boast of the rights of the people, He has created the democracy.

The very sight of a multitude of working people profoundly affected the Master, as one believes it touches Him now upon His Throne; and once, facing such an audience, He gave His great message to the proletariat. Before Him the honest country folk were seated amid the signs of the Divine mercy, with the pasture lilies around them and over their heads the blue of their Father's heaven. A stranger had been struck with the picturesque scene: the green grass, the many-coloured garments of the people, the quiet lake, the little towns upon the lake shore. What affected the heart of the Master that day was the silent and unnoticed tragedy of labour—the men whose hands were callous with hauling ropes, and the women whose faces were prematurely wrinkled with care. He knew the long drudgery of their lives, from morning to night, from the beginning of the year to the end; their scanty wages, when they got anything; the bareness of their homes. He had gone with them to the synagogues and heard on what poor fare their souls were fed for the travail of the week. Jesus was suddenly overcome by an emotion of pity: He could not resist the unconscious appeal of monotonous labour and grinding care. A moment ago He had been reproaching Chorazin and Bethsaida and Capernaum for their unbelief with woe upon woe, but His tone changes and softens. Was not their lot hard enough without His just reproaches? Did they not suffer enough without His farewell being condemnation? His heart goes out to His brethren of toil in a burst of grace and mercy. It is no longer woe, but now, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." From

"woe" to "come"—it was the inconsistency of compassion: it was the confession of fellowship.

Jesus flung a wide net when He addressed the weary; He held out a strong allurement when He offered rest. Rest is one of the dozen comforting and fascinating words of human speech; it is undoctrinal, practical, comprehensive, satisfying; it falls on the ear like the sound of a ballad floating out from some lighted home as the homeless vagrant goes down the street. The word has two renderings—one secular and one spiritual. It may, of course, be taken as a symbol for an easy environment—for shorter hours of labour, better wages for work, healthier houses to live in, easier access to knowledge, more brightness in life. This is not Jesus' reading, but it is not a programme Jesus would despise or that His disciples have any cause to belittle. The social demands of the proletariat, so far as they are within the bounds of justice and do not infringe on the rights of others, ought to receive the hearty support of those who have leisurely lives and luxurious homes. There are houses in every country wherein no man should be obliged to live; hours during which no man should need to labour. And every wise relief to the physical hardship of life must have the approval of our Master.

Jesus, however, used the word rest with reference, not to a man's circumstances, but to his state of soul. His advice through all His ministry was that a man should begin his effort after a happier life within rather than without. Let him first put himself right, and then attack circumstances. If any one considers this life to be nothing but a bondage and an injustice, without any meaning, and without any end, then he is certain to grow bitter and discontented. If he can understand that its hardness—even its very wrongs—may be the discipline of character, then he will have peace. There are two ways of wearing the same yoke and carrying the same burden: either with pride, and

then the softest yoke will chafe; or with humility, and then the stiffest will be kindly. Instead of exciting His audience to rebellion, the first word of the Master was self-restraint and submission. His recommendation to the people was the unworldly, unselfish heart. Had Jesus, as He stood face to face with the toilers of the day, been a Dives, clothed in purple and fine linen, exhorting the poor to contentment with their lot, then He had been guilty of cant, and His audience had been angry with Him for His effrontery. Dives lecturing Lazarus after this fashion is worse than a farce; it is an insult in every age; but the life and character of Jesus were the justification of His argument. No one in that crowd had worked harder or had fewer goods than the Master — it was a penniless and homeless man who spoke of contentment; no one had so calm and quiet a soul — a man living in the very peace of God offered the secret of rest.

His message, as much as His personality, commends Jesus to the people, since He never flattered or cajoled them, since He never bribed or deceived them. He always dealt bravely and truly with the people. How easy had it been for Him to offer them material goods and to intoxicate them with promises of plenty. Once, in an hour of compassion, He did feed a multitude with bread, and afterwards He spoke of His kindness with regret, for the foolish people, who are ever apt to be carried away by largesse, followed Him whithersoever He went, and would have made Him a "bread-king." Our Master had no private ends to serve; He was faithful to tell the people their faults, and to exhort them unto spiritual ambitions, and on that account alone He ought to have their ear. His counsel was also as wise as it was honest. What good will come from conferring power and riches on those who can use neither because they are selfish and impatient; the issue will be waste and destruction. On the other hand, let one learn to govern himself,

and he will not fail of His Kingdom. No power on earth can deny their rights or keep in bondage men who have fought the battle with their own souls, who are clean-living, temperate, intelligent, industrious, with clever hands on their bodies, and the fear of God in their hearts.

When Jesus exhorted the proletariat to humility—the meek and lowly heart—He gave advice which was of use then, but whose value grows with every age, as the centre of power is steadily shifting from the kings to the people. There may be some sharp struggles before the people finally mount the throne, and do their will in the world, but their coronation is not far off. It will be an enormous responsibility for them when it comes, and a keen anxiety for every nation. For the first time in the history of modern times there will be an absolute monarch with none to adjust the balance of power. Hitherto, if a king were tyrannical, he could be checked by his nobles; if the nobles made laws in their own interest, they could be brought to their senses by the middle class; if the capitalists did not do fairly, the working class could make them mend their ways. But who is to correct, moderate, guide the proletariat? If they should be intoxicated with power, and have no regard for any but themselves and their own interests, then the little finger of the people will be heavier on the land than the hand of the Stuart kings or the Bourbons. Many cherish the belief that the people will use their great opportunity well, with discretion and patriotism, in the fear of God and the love of man, and our ground for this hope is the Spirit of Jesus. Without humility democracy can only end in injustice and confusion. Without the influence of Jesus there can be nothing durable or fruitful in democracy. If in the day of their power the people should cast off His yoke, Who has redeemed and led them all these years, it were a lamentable catastrophe, but human ingratitude and foolishness cannot reach this height. Though in Jeru-

salem the people were for the moment deceived, and sent their Saviour to Calvary, they will not again reject Him Who on the Cross laid down His life for them, and now for ever from His throne invites them, and offers them the yoke which is easy, and the burden which is light.

Chapter XVII: The Apologia of Jesus

IT is among the surprises which give a relish to history that one age not only reverses the verdict of another, but that the by-word of one generation becomes the glory of the centuries which follow. The opportunist statesmen of his day despised Isaiah of Jerusalem for his Utopian dreams, but the ideal righteousness of the Hebrew prophet has taken hold of the modern conscience. The apostles of Jesus were considered in their own time dangerous men and disturbers of the peace, but it is now evident that they were the saviours of society and the builders of civilisation. The English ruling class looked on the early Puritans as impious and rebellious persons, but now every one will admit that they laid the foundations of political and religious liberty; and while those noble men who contended for the abolition of slavery, have won a high place in the roll of Christian service, they were counted by their contemporaries little better than anarchists. Our Master is another instance of the reversal of judgment on an appeal to posterity. Jesus was, no doubt, persecuted in His public life for various reasons, because He was indifferent to dogma, because He despised ritual, because He would not come to terms with religious society, because He did not keep the Sabbath after the

Jewish way. Perhaps, however, the chief offence of Jesus was a habit and friendship which His critics could neither understand nor endure. He not only received unfortunate and disreputable people and gave them welcome, but He seemed to go out of His way to seek those miserables, and what has been His attraction since was Jesus' reproach then—that He was the Friend of sinners.

Society is not more intolerant and uncharitable than the individual, but it has always retained the right of exclusion, and, according to the idea of the day, has created its outcasts. Sometimes they are saints who are sent into the wilderness for their goodness, sometimes they are heretics who are ostracised for their error, sometimes they are politicians who are driven out for their lawlessness. About the year 30 society in Judea was intensely ecclesiastical and patriotic, and the kind of offenders reflected its spirit. If any one had openly broken the law, and especially the seventh commandment, or if any one had taken sides with a foreigner, those two people were put under the ban. It was therefore to be expected that if a woman flouted morality openly by making vice a profession, or a man insulted his nation by collecting Roman taxes, that the indignation of society should break on their heads. This woman has ever been as one blasted for the sins of humanity; and though it be not always the tax-gatherer, there is ever some trade to whom no mercy is shown, and in the Gospels the pariahs were the publicans and the harlots.

Between the attitude of Jesus and that of the Pharisees towards those social lepers there was a contrast so sharp that Jesus' conduct must have excited criticism, and may very well have been misunderstood. He was on such friendly terms with Levi (or Matthew), the officer in charge of the Capernaum custom house, that He called upon him to leave his business and become one of His followers. And when Matthew, in the joy of

his heart at this admittance into new associations, gave a feast to his poorer colleagues, Jesus attended and shared the gladness. If He happened to pass through Jericho and needed hospitality, He passed by the houses of respectables, where He could have been a guest, and by deliberate choice spent the night beneath the roof of Zaccheus, a chief publican. A woman who was a sinner had been so touched by His Evangel, that she had crept into a Pharisee's house where He was dining and sought mercy at His feet, and He, Who was expected to order her forth, sent her into peace. In a fit of morality or hypocrisy a gang of Pharisees once brought to Jesus a miserable taken in her shame, and they covered the Master also with shame, but it was her merciless accusers who slunk out of His presence, and it was to the woman Jesus spake kindly. When He made up His College of Apostles, He chose one from the publican class, and among His dearest friends was St. Mary Magdalene. One need not wonder that good people were perplexed and found it hard to do justice to Jesus; if they seem to us censorious, they could make a good case for themselves. A man, and much more a prophet, could be known, it would be argued by His company, and it was Jesus' habit to avoid the Pharisees and to consort with the sinners. He was so determined indeed in His way, and unabashed, that He would jest on the subject, saying to His indignant censors: "How could you expect Me to associate with you? I am a physician, and a physician goes to the sick, not to the whole. You are perfectly well, as you are always telling the world: I can therefore do you no good. Am I a prophet? Then of course I need not speak with you; you are wise and good; you are everything which could be desired, and you know everything: I must work with those abjects which are out of the way, to do something for them, to teach them something." With such lambent humour Jesus used to play round those dull, pompous Phari-

sees, and they still more disliked Him. He might be a Teacher from God, but it was strange in that case that He did not associate with God's people; He might be a good man; but why was He so much with sinners?

Sometimes His critics were so irritated that they lost all control of their tongues, and allowed themselves the luxury of sheer slander. "He is a glutton and a wine-bibber," they said in a fit of spleen, not because Jesus went to feasts, but because He dined with Levi as well as with Simon, and was more at home with the publican than with the Pharisee. Jesus felt these charges, for it is from His lips we hear them, but He did not condescend to defend Himself. There are slanders which refute themselves, and one gathers that His enemies were the angrier with Jesus because they knew, as everybody knew, that He was stainless. He could stoop so low because His soul was so high; He could risk so much because He was so strong. It is a fallacy to think that the man who has most compassion on a sinner is nearest to his sin, and that he who arraigns the sinner most mercilessly has the cleanest heart. None ever gave such gracious welcome to sinners as Jesus, and He changed them into saints; none made men into irreconcilable sinners like a Pharisee, and his heart was a sepulchre full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.

When Jesus thought fit to defend, not His character but His mission, the Master at once lifted the debate to the highest level of reason and pathos, and offered to the Pharisees the most convincing remonstrance ever addressed to an opponent. It was not His nature to think that everyone who opposed Him must be dishonest or mad; He supposed that he was simply mistaken, and it was Jesus' business to correct his mistake. "You have censured and slandered me," He said in effect to the Pharisees: "you think that My life is a huge mistake and little short of a sin. This is not because you are bad or because

you desire to do Me injustice: it is simply because you and I have different standpoints. If you saw these sinners with My eyes, you would act towards them as I do, for God has given you a reason and a heart." One day when His critics had been especially severe, Jesus seized the occasion and made His great apologia in the fifteenth chapter of St. Luke's Gospel. "This man," they murmured in genuine horror, "receiveth sinners and eateth with them." "Yes," Jesus said, "and if you understood, so would you. What man among you?"

The controversy went far deeper than any question of expediency—whether a prophet should have social relations with sinners—it turned on two different views of God and man, and on the scheme of Divine government. According to the fancy of the Pharisees in all ages the Divine purpose is to select from the bloom on the human tree a few buds and bring them to perfection, while the rest is left to perish. It is to produce from the raw material a web of beautiful pattern and colour, which means that there must be much human waste. As regards the world, one nation, the Jews, were the chosen flower, and the Gentiles were the blossom trodden under foot. As regards the Jewish nation itself, the Pharisees were God's finished work and the publicans were the waste. Within the synagogues, as in a safe storehouse, were gathered the favourites of God; outside lay the huge, unsightly waste-heaps. Nothing can be done with the refuse; no one wishes to have anything to do with it. Better for the Church and for society to ignore the sinners, and if it were possible to put them out of sight. It were a good thing for religion if they could be collected together and sunk in the depths of the sea.

According to Jesus the sinners were certainly waste and very dangerous stuff—for He never belittled or condoned sin—but it was culpable waste, the result of imperfect religious processes. Had the elder brother done his duty, the younger would not

have remained so long in the far country or grown so desperate. Mary Magdalene was an offence to the community, but she had not been so helpless or degraded if Simon had not despaired of her and cast her forth. What Jesus implicitly denied at every turn—by His teaching and His death—was that there should or will be any necessary or final waste in humanity. Just as the progress of science is marked by the recovery or utilisation of what was thought to be worthless stuff, so that out of what is most unsightly is now brought fair colours, so Jesus proposed to make lovely saints out of these forsaken sinners. As a great spiritual inventor Jesus moved among the residuum of His day, with quick eye and hopeful heart, touching and handling it with deftness and understanding. Nothing of God's human work must be counted worthless; in the end nothing of it will be flung away. Lost is a word with two meanings: with the Pharisees it was a description, cast away; with Jesus it was a prophecy, going to be found.

As usual, the Master made His appeal to reason, and asked men's suffrages because His view was the most fitting. Round Him gathered a crowd—hearing the Pharisees' criticisms, waiting for His defence—and He was willing to abide by their decision. First, He addressed a farmer standing in the second row—strong, sensible, prejudiced. Last week his flock of sheep came home one short in the evening—only one lost, and ninety and nine in the fold—yet this matter-of-fact and unemotional man scoured the country-side, nor rested till his tale of sheep was complete. No one laughed at him; no one censured him. Why should they? It was his property; and was the Creator of all more careless or more foolish than a Galilean farmer? Did He not care about His creatures also who were not sheep but human beings? Behind the farmer was a young housewife, and yesterday there had been a little tragedy of domestic life in her home. As she was handling her necklace

of silver coins, one slipped from her fingers and rolled out of sight. A poor little coin, and not worth a thought. Yet it had its associations, for it had been her mother's, and had been a part of her dowry. So she rested not till it was found, and her neighbours, instead of finding fault with her, shared her joy. And were not His human pieces of silver as precious to God? While He was speaking His eye already rested with sympathy on a prominent figure standing out from among His audience, round whom a very pleasant interest had gathered. He was a man of substance, a country squire and magistrate, respected and beloved, and some years ago he had suffered the keenest of human afflictions, which is not the loss of a son but his disgrace. His younger son, a headstrong lad, yet lovable, had given him trouble at home — too much with the gay company at Tiberias — and then one day he departed to a distant Gentile city, where he played the fool so shamelessly that the tidings came to his Galilean home and his father aged visibly. Fellow Pharisees, like Simon, with whom he used to feast before he lost heart for feasting, said he was well rid of the wastrel, and that it would be a good thing if he never returned. His father may have also passed careless judgment after that fashion on other prodigals, but circumstances had changed, and he was silent at Simon's advice. He could not be quite indifferent to the fate of one of his two sons; and when the young man came back an honest, humble penitent, and his father, sitting lonely and sad on the housetop, saw him coming down the familiar road, he forgot the counsel of Simon and all the other Pharisees and not only gave him public joyful welcome but celebrated his return with the feast of a king. As Jesus touched on this happy romance of love, the faces of hard, suspicious Pharisees softened; for they had kinder hearts, if it came to their own flesh and blood, than they allowed to God, and would not on any account have done the things they imputed to Him without scruple. It was

as when the sun shines on grey rock after a shower and softens the face. Had not God also a father's heart as much as they? and would not they give Him also the liberty of joy when such a one as Mary of Magdala or Matthew the Publican came home? And the Pharisees did not wish to answer Jesus, because they were with Him for once mind and heart.

As the Master revealed the idea of God, in Whom is gathered and perfected beyond imagination everything which is reasonable and beautiful in man, He gave at the same time to the Pharisees the idea of a sinner, and it was something which never could have entered into these prosaic, frigid minds. For the Master was persuaded that a sinner was miserable, and the very idea was strange and almost diverting to a Pharisee. It seemed to him that the sinners were entirely happy after their kind, because they were often rich, and had a certain power, and gave feasts and lived riotously. Perhaps there were days when the saints regarded the sinners with envy because of "the roses and raptures of vice." Jesus, Who knew all men, and had ever His hand on their pulse, saw beneath the poor show of gaiety and the mask of bravado. He knew the self-reproach and sated disgust, the bitter remorse and wistful regrets of the sinner. According to the Master the sinners were hungry and thirsty, labouring and heavy-laden, vagrants of the highways and hedges, a set of despairing miserables. They were as a sheep which, either through wilfulness or foolishness, had wandered from the flock, and has lost its way, and is far from the fold, rushing hither and thither, torn and bleeding, palpitating and terrified.

The Master also believed firmly that the sinner was precious; and neither had this occurred to a Pharisee. The value of such a woman as washed Jesus' feet seemed less than nothing: she was a disgrace and a snare, an ulcer eating into the very vitals of society. She was a sad tragedy certainly, with her degraded beauty

and gay attire — a woman ruined, a woman ruining. Was she not also a soul made in the Divine image and intended for high ends — a coin which had passed through many unholy hands, and now lay in the mire. She was still silver, and had on her the traces of her origin. What a wealth of passionate love and unreserved devotion was running to waste in this life! Now this piece of good money shall be laid out to usury, when the eyes wherewith she tempted men's hearts to destruction shall shed tears on the Master's feet, and the hair wherewith she ensnared men's lives shall wipe them dry.

And the Master dared to think that every sinner who had gone away was missed of God. It might seem that amid the multitude of His creatures one less counted for nothing; but if any Pharisee thought so, he did not know the minuteness and the breadth of the Divine Love. It had no forgetfulness: it made no omissions. As a bookman will discover in the dark the absence of a tiny volume, as a gardener will mark the empty place where a plant had been once, as a workman looks in vain for the tool among many his hand desires, so does the Divine Love have in constant remembrance him who is lost, and will not rest till he be restored.

The Pharisees made their great mistake because they did not know God, and Jesus threw Himself in the way of sinners because He knew the Father. He was indeed the true Elder Brother, Who saw the sorrow on the Father's face as He mourned for His lost younger son and could not remain in the Home; Who went Himself into the far country, nor ceased from His search till by His Grace and Passion He had found His brother and brought him Home rejoicing. This was the meaning of His strange friendships: this was the secret of His unconquerable hope.

Chapter XVIII: An Arraignment of the Respectables

WHAT is called the middle class has usually been regarded as a creation of modern times, and certainly no parallel can be drawn between society in our day and, say, the Middle Ages, when a nation was divided between a handful of nobles and a multitude of retainers. One land, however, of the past presented an almost perfect analogy to our social condition — Palestine in the days of our Lord. There was an aristocracy composed of a priestly caste, with hereditary rank and vast endowments, and an outer circle of Herodian courtiers and state officials. With this class Jesus had no contact till the end of His life, when the priests were alarmed for their privileges and protected themselves by the cross. There was the proletariat — the vinedressers, shepherds, fishermen, farmers of Galilee, who lived hardly and suffered many wrongs. From this class Jesus sprang, and to them He was always loyal. And there was a class in easy circumstances, of undoubted virtue, good intelligence, and solid influence, which had a standing feud with the aristocracy, and regarded the people with frank contempt. This was the middle class, which was the strength of the nation and had an undeniable claim on respect,

but covered itself with disgrace because its members rejected Jesus with intention and deliberation.

Between the middle class of His day and Jesus there seemed to be an inevitable and natural antipathy; and Jesus, who dealt so kindly with the outcasts of society, was invariably severe with the respectables. He laid Himself out to attract and win the prodigal son in the far country, but the correct elder brother at home He put in the pillory, till we almost forget the vice of the one and the virtue of the other. The lawlessness, the impudence, the evil-living, the corruption of the sinners Jesus only once described in the Prodigal Son, although their manner of life was to Him utterly loathsome and most tragic; but the faults of the Pharisees, down to their very foibles, He exposes with merciless satire. It was indeed, a social paradox that Jesus should come to confirm the law of Moses, and that the middle class of His time were the devotees of the Law, and yet that this very Law should rise as a barrier between the Master and the middle class, so that Jesus used the Ten Words to condemn them, and they prosecuted Him as a lawbreaker. That Jesus should come to declare the kingdom, seen afar off by the prophets, and that the respectables had been waiting, as none others did, for its coming, and yet that the sinners should answer the invitation of the Master and possess its riches, while the Pharisees counted themselves unworthy of everlasting life. The relation between Jesus and this class was strained from the beginning, with suspicion on their side, with indignation on His; while now and again there was a hot collision, and at last a life-and-death wrestle. What ailed Jesus at the respectables?

For one thing He could not endure their immovable and contented self-righteousness, and this was the point of the parable, at once so merciless and so merciful, of the Pharisee and the publican. It is by a phrase that a man reveals himself, and when

the Pharisee stood in the temple of God, the highest and holiest place he could find, and returned thanks that he was not as other men, and especially not as this publican, you have Pharisaism taken in the act. Surely he might have been satisfied to rehearse the catalogue of his own virtues without the contrast of another's vices; but as a dark curtain is hung behind an orator, to fling his figure into relief, so an inattentive or unappreciative audience will be most likely to appreciate his spiritual excellence when it is set against a foil. It was the life-long habit of this respectable to exhibit himself as the very type and paragon of religion, and it was his art to keep himself in constant comparison with the miserables. Before God and men he desired to present a study in black and white, and for this end he required a publican. Each had his rôle—the Pharisee religion and the publican irreligion. "God," says this artist in religious insolence, "I thank Thee that I am not as this publican." Jesus has been hotter and more solemn; never has the Master been keener and more severe.

What gave the edge to Jesus' words was not that this respectable had greatly exaggerated his own virtues or his neighbour's vices. Let us grant that he did not. His was certainly an oration rather than a prayer, but it was neither flattery nor slander; it was very much matter of fact. If any class disgraced the Jewish nation in the time of Jesus, it was the men who collected the Roman taxes and traded on the misery of their own flesh and blood. Their conduct cut the sinews of the national life; their name was a synonym for avarice and cruelty; it was not for nothing that this national traitor was bracketed with the social residuum and his name made a synonym for sinner. If any single class was the backbone of the nation, it was the Pharisees, and nothing the Master said against their bigotry and hypocrisy denied their social value and solidity. They were, in the main, men who feared God and loved their nation, and did righteous-

ness, according to their light; and notwithstanding their exclusiveness and arrogance they commanded the respect of the people. When a Pharisee took credit for his respectability, he was speaking from the book; just as when one of themselves declares that our middle class, which begins below the fashionable people and stops above the unskilled labourers, is the real strength of the nation, he is stating a self evident fact.

It was not self-righteous for the Pharisee to hold that he was a more useful member of society than the average publican, for this was simply a fact; but it was inexcusably self-righteous for him to take credit for this circumstance, as under a show of deference to the Almighty he was doing, since, indeed he had no credit in the matter. His father had been an orthodox, well-living, reputable man, and he had been born with the instincts of religious faith and moral decency in his blood. In his youth he had been drilled in the law of Moses, and on coming to manhood he found himself a member of the Brahmin caste, pledged to the worship of God and to clean living. With the glare of public opinion on him, and hedged round with the habits of his class, the Pharisee might become narrow and censorious; it was hardly possible for him to give the reins to passion or to outrage social order. He was held in the path of formal righteousness, the slave of fortunate circumstances. Compare him with the publican, whom some sudden impulse of repentance had brought to the Temple, and who had been dragged for scenic purposes into the Pharisee's prayer. A publican's son, he inherited the feelings of an outcast class—a rooted suspicion of society and a sullen hatred of social bonds. One of the vivid recollections of his childhood was his father coming home to describe an insult of the Pharisees, and to rail at religion. For him there was no school, and the children hooted him on the street till he felt himself on the level of a dog. As a man he was a pariah, and he came to accept the situation. No good

was believed of him, any evil was expected of him; he was ostracised by respectable people, he was shut up with reprobates. What could Jewish society expect of the publican but insolence, and rapacity, and shamelessness, and robbery? So they stood together in the Temple—the man whom society had made, and the man whom society had ruined—and the Pharisee, with an amazing audacity, thanked God he was not as this publican.

The respectables provoked the Master also by their pettiness, so that He could not look on them and hold His peace. One day He had been asked to meat at some chief Pharisee's house, and as none heeded Him, a poor prophet, amid the ceremonious reception of distinguished guests, the Master, from his quiet place, took note of the scene. As each Pharisee came in he cast a swift, covert glance over the feast chamber to identify the head of the table and the chief seats, and then he began a series of strategical movements that he might, either by the host's invitation or without it, secure a high place for himself. With His innocent humour, Jesus saw the devices of the local magnates—how this one boldly appropriated a seat as one of assured dignity; how another, in pure unconsciousness, found himself in a high place; how an unfortunate, who had mismanaged his affairs, was asked to take a lower place. Some were much satisfied as they noted their positions, and made pleasant remarks on the excellent arrangements; some were highly indignant because they had been undervalued, and they became disagreeable. For days the former would be complacent; for months the latter would be out of temper, so serious was social precedency, so modest was their ambition, so narrow and paltry was the mind of a respectable. Yet these Pharisees, who manœuvred for a seat at a dinner-table, were the heads of the religious community and the ruling class in the district. For the great feast of God's Kingdom—the things which are unseen

and eternal, Righteousness, Joy, and Peace—they had no desire; for the jots and tittles of rabbinical doctrine, and the tithing of mint and cummin, and greetings in the market place and a certain seat at a feast, they argued, and schemed, and hungered, and thirsted. What an utter want of intellectual imagination! What a blindness of spiritual vision! What a poverty of soul! What an incapacity for passion! These frigid and cautious souls, walking on tiptoe through life and ever guarding their own dignity, swathed in pedantry and soaked in self-consciousness, were very unpromising material for the Master and His Evangel, which demanded an absolute self-forgetfulness and a joyful abandonment of faith. Because the miserables had no self-conceit, and no position, and no dignity; they were so far opened for the Master's call, and because the respectables were tied, hand and foot, by dogmas and notions, by self-importance and conventionality, they were hindered, and so it came to pass that the publicans and harlots entered the Kingdom of God and the children of the Kingdom were cast out.

Perhaps, however, the crowning offence of the respectables in the eyes of Jesus was their confirmed and impenetrable callousness, and upon one dramatic occasion this gave the Master a shock of strong indignation. It was again at a feast, where Simon, a chief Pharisee, had invited Him to his house—not for courtesy or hospitality, rather for insolent patronage and cunning criticism. From the beginning He was made to know His place—an inferior asked to dinner as an act of condescension, who must not expect the attentions given to other guests on a social equality with Simon. As each guest arrived his sandals were removed by obsequious servants, and his feet washed with cool refreshing water; as he sat down in his appointed place his head was anointed with fragrant oil. For the Master there was neither water nor oil, but the servants, taking their cue from Simon, allowed Him to pass with a menial's disdain

for the poor. By-and-by attention would be given to the Master, when, after Simon and his guests had feasted, they would, at their leisure, put ensnaring questions to Jesus, and gather material for persecutions. As it happened that day they were anticipated by one who had not been invited by Simon nor had come to criticise Jesus, who was ready to repair the neglect of the servants, and to afford to Jesus a feast sweeter than meat and drink. When Simon sat at the head of his table, full of polite dislike for the Master, and a woman of the town washed His feet with her tears, the extremes of society met, and Jesus marked the inhumanity of Simon, to whom the woman, in her penitence, was only an object of contempt.

Between Simon and the woman a great gulf had been fixed, and Jesus looked from one side to the other. It was no blame to Simon that he had lived cleanly and honourably; it was a gain to the community, and Simon received his just reward in their approbation and his own position. No excuse can be made for the woman, who was a shame to herself and a curse to the community. But in Jesus' opinion the severest blame should fall on Simon for his indifference and hardness, as it appears he knew the poor wretch who had crept into his house unbidden, and was kneeling amid general scorn at the Master's couch. Very likely he could have told her history. Was she a Pharisee's daughter? Very likely he had often met her on the street, and gathered up his robes lest she should touch them. So far as he condemned vice he was right, for such condemnation is a safeguard to society and a premium on well doing. But what had he done for her salvation? Nothing; and when she was that day tossed upon his inhospitable shore, a piece of human wreckage, he was disgusted and angry. "This woman," he said; "This publican," said the other Pharisees; "Thy son," said the elder brother; and against this superciliousness Jesus lifted up His voice. So it came to pass that in the day when

the Master visited Simon's house the respectable at the head of the table had in him a heart to belittle and condemn Jesus, and the miserable in her lowly place broke her heart at His feet.

Chapter XIX: A Warning to the Rich

IT is inevitable that any prophet who sets himself to regenerate society shall face the problem of riches, and various circumstances made it very acute for Jesus. He came Himself of the working class, and had a keen sympathy with their life. Poverty in Jesus' day was grinding and helpless, when wages were not always paid and judges could be always bought. His duty led Him into the houses of rich people which were in painful contrast to the home of His youth, and He was made to feel in many ways that an invitation to a rich man's house was an honour to be thankfully and humbly used. Would it have been wonderful if a certain tone of moral bitterness and just resentment had crept into Jesus' speech as He considered how differently Providence had treated a heartless ingrate like Simon the Pharisee and a faithful saint like His own mother? Surely if there be any anomaly in practical affairs, it is that people full of pride and blind to spiritual beauty should be dowered with goods, while some of the noblest souls should be harassed by narrow means and petty struggles. And at this sight wise men have lost their heads and used wild words.

No cross providence, however, affected the sweetness of the

Master's soul or biased the impartiality of His teaching. Jesus' sayings gave no hint that He ever regretted His own poverty, or that He envied the circumstances of Simon, or that He thought such persons had been favourably treated by His Father. What rather strikes one is the constant suggestion that rich men were to be pitied and that their possessions were a drawback to their life. Jesus moves in and out of the great houses with a fine detachment and gracious condescension, as one having a more splendid and lasting heritage. He laments the slender and sordid ambitions of the rich who have no understanding and do not grasp at great things, and it was to Him a fact full of meaning that the kingdom which was for the most part rejected by the respectables, as a devout imagination, was received with great joy in the dwellings of the poor. It is laid on His heart to speak to the rich as no prophet has done since, not with reproaches and invective, as if they had wronged their brethren and were licensed robbers, but with anxiety, as to persons who, through a misfortune of great possessions, were apt to make the chief loss of life. As He delivers His message, although sometimes for the sake of courtesy it takes the shape of a parable, one rich man after another stands out in his place and can be identified.

The first is given without disguise because he was an acquaintance of Jesus and the figure in a romantic incident. He was a young man residing somewhere in the country and belonged to the higher class in society. His father had been wealthy, and the son had succeeded to a large inheritance. Unlike the son of another squire, who had despised the quiet country life and had played the prodigal in a Gentile country, this man had more respect for himself and his name. He had other tastes than meat and drink, and had carried himself with such intelligence and honour that he was raised to the rank of ruler in the nation. His character of good principle and solid worth was quickened

by spiritual ideas and unworldly instincts. There was also in him a fine vein of enthusiasm and a habit of self-forgetfulness which were very taking. Born heir to dangerous advantages and competing temptations, he was neither a profligate nor a prig, but a well-living, cultured, high-spirited, reverent gentleman; one to whom Providence may well give riches, and who may be rich with safety.

It was certain that this young ruler would be profoundly interested in Jesus, and in Him the Master had a likely disciple. He would be weary unto death of the religion of the day and the insincerity of religious people; he would have an ear quick to catch the note of reality, and a sense to appreciate the appeals of the new Teacher. It would, of course, matter nothing to him that Jesus was poor, any more than that many of the Pharisees were rich. It was only a vulgar person like the man of the barns who would have estimated Jesus by his garments; at the young ruler's Jesus would have had water for his feet, and every courtesy.

From time to time he had heard Jesus, and had been charmed by the elevation and delicacy of His sentiments. One day, as he [illegible] alone in his library thinking on the greatest things, news [illegible]e that Jesus was passing, and might never again return. The enthusiasm which was in the air fired the young ruler, and under a heavenly impulse—that breath from above of which Jesus spoke—he rushed into the way and knelt in devotion at Jesus' feet. "Thou hast the secret of life. I think, and I feel, and I work, but I have not yet tasted the fulness of living. What must I do to inherit everlasting life?" As Jesus looked at this man in his nobility, and heard his ingenuous prayer, the Master's soul went out to him, and He loved the young ruler.

When Jesus answered that, for him, the entrance into the larger life of the soul must be poverty, the Master laid down

a hard condition, and yet one would have expected it to be fulfilled. If Peter left his fishing-boat, and Matthew his custom house at the bidding of Jesus, neither having souls of special refinement, then this man of finer clay will go out to welcome the invitation of the Master. This surely is the very man to follow Jesus, in whom the Master will find another John; and when he makes the great refusal, Jesus cannot conceal His disappointment nor His regret over the subtle power of riches and their unexpected fascination. For riches are not to be judged as simply so much gold in a treasure chest, which its owner can count in his leisure hours. They are, in the hands of such a one as this young ruler, the means of a cultured life, and one of the conditions of an assured position. He would be indifferent to meat and drink, and he would rather despise purple and fine linen; but he did value the company of his social equals — men of the same habits as himself—and an atmosphere of refinement and freedom from petty cares. He was asked to reduce himself to poverty, and to become the companion of fishermen, whose ways were not his ways, and to wander about the country, who had lived in a beautiful home; and even although he would fain have had Jesus for his friend, he shrank from the sacrifice. And thus a man so hopeful and attractive that Jesus loved him, denied himself the fulness of everlasting life because he was rich.

The second rich man appears in a story, although he is evidently a close study from life, and he is a very unlovely character. As one gathers from his increase in wealth and his coarseness of tone, he has not been the heir to riches and position, as was the young ruler, and he had not therefore his fine instincts and graciousness. His had been the stern, hard struggle from poverty to affluence — a progress not from knowledge to knowledge, nor from character to character, but from barn to barn. His was not a bright intellect engaging itself with spiritual affairs, but his was the capacity for gathering money,

which seems to be consistent with the coarsest stupidity. His was no ambition to learn the secret of life; his one passion was to be the richest man in the district. A simple character which any one may read—this big farmer, and self-made man, grasping at every profit, crushing the weaker merchants in corn, making huge profits out of the needs of the poor, jingling his money in the hearing of all, and ever bragging how little he began with, how much he now possessed, how cleverly he had farmed, bargained, invested, accumulated, till the district was weary of him.

The man of the barns did not give any consideration to Jesus, —a penniless fellow who had unsound ideas on property, and might ask for money,—but Jesus gave some thought to him. The Master catches him in an hour of his success, when he is swollen and blatant with prosperity, and etches him with the keenest irony. It has been a very successful harvest that year; his ground has brought forth plentifully; and, as is usual with his omnivorous class, he garners all the gain from the soil, and the sunshine, from the shower and the wind of God, as from other men's labour and other men's brains, as his just and sole possession. He is quite overcome and perplexed by his affluence—as such men, they tell us, often are—and really does not know what to do with what he calls "my fruits." As there surely must have been some partnership between this self-sufficient man and God before he could have been so embarrassed with these fruits, some one might have suggested to this distressed millionaire a way of escape. Why not make a great feast and entertain the poor? Why not share "my fruits" with the labourers who had helped to obtain them? Most likely he had some poor relations who would not have refused a portion. Plutocrats, bewailing the embarrassment of their riches and the burden laid upon them, do not, however, always welcome counsels of charity, and this afflicted man had to solve the

problem by himself. One day he had a sudden inspiration, which for weeks, if he had been able, he would have mentioned as an instance of originality: he would pull down the barns which were bursting with plenty—he could make sacrifices on occasion—and erect larger barns, and therein he would store "my fruits and my goods," for the sense of his possessions is growing.

When that is done, he will have a conference with his soul; and if you be allowed to hear a man and his soul speak together, you understand the man. Jesus takes us to the door of the room (or was it a barn?), and we overhear one of the choicest of conversations—that between this kind of rich man and his soul. It could only by courtesy be called a conversation, as the soul of such a man has been so brow-beaten and reduced and ignored that it has nothing to say, and hardly exists.

"Soul," said he—and then it occurs to one how strange he should, with his fruits and his barns, remember that he has such a thing as a soul; and next, one wonders what he can have to speak about with his soul; but he is not to make any rash excursion into religion—"Soul, thou hast much goods"—wheat, that is, and barley, and oil, and wines—"laid up"—that is, in the new barns which are the admiration of the countryside—"for many years"—perhaps ten, not very long as a soul's life goes, yet every man must speak in the only terms he understands. "Take thine ease"—he is speaking to the spiritual part of him—"eat"—to his soul—"drink"—his soul—"and be merry"—his immortal soul. Nothing so scathing, so contemptuous, so unanswerable ever fell from the lips of Jesus. "Fool," said God; for that night the man died, and an heir emptied the barns, while the soul of the man entered, a friendless pauper, into the spiritual world.

The third man of riches is a stronger figure and a more complicated character: he has taken his place in history and made

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, . . . and there was a certain begger named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores: . . . moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.—Luke, XVI. 19-21.

for himself a name because he has been used to throw into relief the contrast between poverty and riches. He is not a sordid, ignorant wretch like the man of the barns, nor a student like the young ruler, but rather stands for the luxury and magnificence of riches. His house was the castle of the district. His feasts were known far and wide; he was a patron of the arts, and had an eye for beautiful things. His days were so occupied with large affairs, and his evenings with splendid hospitality, that he had no leisure for private charity; but there was in him a generous heart, and he would have done kindly things if he had only thought. As it was in the greatness of his way he did not notice the beggar, whose place was by his gate, and who, with others of his kind, depended on the largesse from the rich man's overflowing table. Without was Lazarus in his sores and misery, within was Dives in his purple and fine linen, and so occupied was Dives with his affairs and his feasts that he passed Lazarus every day without a thought. Amid his easy environment his imagination had died, and he could not put himself in his brother's place, nor did the contrast between the two lots affect his comfort. The after-look and the discipline of remorse awoke what, unspoiled by riches, had been a kindly, brotherly heart. In spite of the years of thoughtless luxury and unconscious selfishness the heart of Dives still remained, and in his hour of sore trouble he bethought himself of his brethren; but it needed fire to shake this victim of prosperity out of self, and set him free from the grip of riches and their insidious, deadening power.

So three men are ruined by riches: one by fastidious refinement, one by coarse greed, one by unrestrained luxury; and Jesus was terrified lest His disciples should share their doom, and declared with emphasis that for a rich man to enter God's kingdom would be as great a marvel as that a camel should pass through the eye of a needle.

Chapter XX: With the Children

NEVER was gracious teaching commended by a more winsome life than in the case of Jesus, and no feature in His life is more fascinating than His love for children. It may be laid down as a law that every wholesome and sweet-blooded person will delight in little children in exact proportion to his goodness, because they have come so recently from the Father, and show unto us older folk the innocence and simplicity of the Eden state. We read in them the first chapter of our history, before the storm and stress of life begin, and from middle age we regard childhood with wistful regret. As Jesus was the best of us all, He loved children most, and the imperative self-denial of His calling quickened this devotion. Although He loved to describe the marriage procession and the marriage feast, and fondly touched on the joy of the bridegroom and his friends, there could be no marriage joy for Him, and He must be a childless man. While every man went unto his own house—after some gathering of the people—He went to the hillside and to His Father; and while for others there stretched long years packed full of labour and human fellowship, He ever anticipated the tragedy of the Cross. So Jesus, lonely, homeless, doomed, turned unto the chil-

dren, in whom His longing for affection was satisfied, in whose unclouded faces He forgot for the moment the shadow of the Cross. The children were the consolation of Jesus, who ever loved Him and gave Him welcome, who never suspected or turned against Him. And He was their Protector, Who told His disciples that it were better for a man to have a millstone fastened to his neck and be cast into the depths of the sea than to offend one of the children, and Who declared that for every child there was an angel, and that the children's angels ever saw the face of the Father.

Apart from the friendship between the children and Jesus, the sympathy of the innocent and the good, Jesus saw in His little companions a likeness of His Kingdom. It was His happy misfortune to come with an Evangel, not only so new and so glad but also so unworldly and undogmatic that it could hardly find acceptance with the Church of His time. As Jesus looked on the Pharisees, a solid phalanx of fanatics, wedded to tradition, swathed in forms, suspicious of grace, hard of soul, His heart failed; for if this were religion, then there were none to receive His Evangel. He turned from the Pharisees to the children, and saw what He desired—the spirit and type of true religion; here were an open mind, humility of spirit, a simple trust, a charming fancy, a spring of love. To be religious, what is it? To believe and live like a Pharisee, answered the Church. No, said the Master, to be like a little child; he who hath the child spirit hath the kingdom of God. It was a shrewd charge, and meant more than met the eye, when the Pharisees called Jesus the Friend of Sinners, for it assumed a new idea of God. It had been as searching to have called Him the Friend of Children, for this reproach would have implied a new idea of religion.

There are four child scenes in the Gospels, and the first was in a market place. After the business of the day was over and the traders had departed, the open, silent space in the heart of some

Galilean village passed into the possession of the children, and in the cool of the day they held their carnival. This evening they had fallen out over the game to be played. One party—having very likely been defeated in the last—were offended, and sulked. The others, having gained and being magnanimous, were full of courtesy, and would do anything their playmates wished. Would they have a marriage? A procession is formed, with the bridegroom leading the bride to her new home, and the children dance and sing, but the sullen group in the corner will not move. Ah, they are sad; then let us have a funeral; and now the procession is with slow step and loud lamentations, as when the dead are carried to the grave. And still their friends will not join. How tiresome! The children play in utter self-unconsciousness, and give no thought to the figure in the shadow, who has watched the scene with kindly, understanding eye, and will use it with telling effect as a criticism of the generation. As the children fulfil the dramatic instinct which is born in us all, and play their game without guile, without malice, without private ends, in gaiety of heart, Jesus sees human nature in its simplicity. They were not perfect; and if they had been, the children had not been lovable, for then they had been young Pharisees. They were real and unaffected. How good-natured was the one set! and if the others for a moment had lost their temper, we know how soon a child's mood changes. Most likely before the sun went down and the children left the darkening stage they had made up their quarrel, and were once more in high fellowship. For children bear no grudge, and carry no account of ill-will from day to day; easily cast down and easily lifted, theirs is unspoiled, natural, uncomplicated humanity. Actors they were that evening, and Jesus was mightily pleased with their acting, as no doubt, like other great souls, He was with all the young folk's games; but how harmless and pleasant was the play! By-and-by these children

would grow up and take their places on a larger stage. Their openness and teachableness, their gentleness and pliability will depart, and their fresh young natures will harden into prejudices, and hatred, and ambition, and treachery. Jesus had seen the degeneration, and that is why He turned from the fathers to the children; why He could rest His mind watching the actors in the market place with human delight, but afterwards attacked their elders with scathing invective—"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, actors."

The next incident is an interior, and most likely took place in Peter's house at Capernaum. The Master had been making one of His journeys in Galilee, and that day had been telling His disciples of His death with such awe and mystery that they could neither understand nor question Him, but were struck with fear. Jesus went on before, thinking of His coming agony, and the Twelve, having nothing else to do, took up a favourite dispute, who among them should be chief. What a ghastly irony it was—these twelve full-grown men, who yesterday were hauling fishes on the sea of Galilee, or receiving petty taxes, falling out and using hot words about honours in the kingdom of God, which were not temporal but spiritual, and could only be bought with blood! Jesus overheard the squabble—not the last He would have to settle—and it served one good purpose, turning His thoughts for the moment from the Cross; but He waited His turn, Who knew the right moment as He ever said the right word. As soon as they had entered the house—Jesus' home in Capernaum—Jesus asked His company what had been the cause of the dispute by the way, and instantly a shame-faced silence fell on the Twelve. They had been very keen and eloquent a few moments ago, but now they were embarrassed for want of words. One looked at the ceiling, another at the floor, a third was interested in something happening in the street, a fourth made as though

he would speak but did not, till it fell to the Master to take speech. With His quick and gentle humour He saw the opportunity for one of those rebukes in parable of which He was so fond, and which He had so often to administer to His foolish pupils. Among the inmates of the house was a boy, Peter's little lad, we guess, who was one of the Master's fast friends, and with whom Jesus had many pleasant passages. He came to welcome his friend home, and Jesus took His playmate on His knee—the child had a way of flinging his arms around the Master's neck which scandalised Peter, but which the Master vastly liked—while round them stood the big, hardy, weather-beaten men, the boy's father among them. Jesus looked from the lad to His big children: a word was enough to expound the picture. How modest and unassuming, how free from self-seeking and ambition, is a right-minded child! —and Jesus' friend was that. He does not argue nor set up his opinion; he does not assert nor aggrandise himself. He goes where he is told, and takes what is given him; he is accustomed to serve and fulfil other people's wishes. What a kindly, obliging, obedient little fellow was Peter's boy! They all knew him well; for them all he had done some slight service; for him they all had some caress, as the disciples came out and in at the Master's lodging. After all, was not this self-forgetfulness and sweet humility greater than pride, and honour, and striving, and high places? And Jesus declared that he who had the child's heart possessed the kingdom of God.

The third incident took place in the open, when Jesus had set His face to go to Jerusalem, and it came on the back of an argument with His constant enemies, who dogged His steps in Galilee and followed Him beyond Jordan. With their characteristic taste and their usual desire to ensnare Jesus, they demanded His judgment on the Mosaic law of divorce, which afforded Pharisees material for much discussion. Jesus discours-

ing on divorce or Sabbath-breaking or dinner ceremonial was very incongruous; for if there was one subject more alien to the Master's mind than dogma, it was casuistry. He answered His critics with a tired tone, as one who did not relish such subjects; but afterwards He had to explain Himself to His disciples, who dwelt upon the subject as if the conditions and circumstances of divorce were a green pasture for the soul. At this very moment, by an interposition of Providence, Jesus was relieved, and transported from the region He most disliked — the sins of impurity — to that which He loved most — the fellowship of little children. Who should break in on Jesus and His disciples but a company of women — faithful wives and pure mothers — bringing the children God had given them through the mystery of marriage that His Son might bless them. Our worthy and self-important disciples were very indignant that Jesus should be troubled by mothers and children at such a time. Who were they to intrude on theologians, clearing up a point in casuistry, with their foolishness and prattle? The disciples must guard the Master from this incursion; indeed they were often inclined to guard Him from Himself, Who was only too apt to condescend to children and suchlike simple folk when He might have been debating with Pharisees. Like many wiser men, the disciples did not grasp the inwardness of a spiritual situation, and Jesus turned upon them in open anger. If there was such a curse in the world as lust, it must be dealt with; but who would think of lust when Love herself was present? Were not the two glories of the spiritual life Love and Holiness? and the type of the one was a mother, of the other, a young child. The mothers, who had shrunk back with their terrified children, came forward again; the frown on Jesus' face changes into a smile, and sunshine lights His eyes. He stretches out His arms, and children nestle in His bosom. The Master is content, and the children

are at home with Him, for "of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

The Master met for the last time with His faithful friends in august circumstances, not now in fisherman's house nor in the open fields, but in the Temple of Jerusalem. He had made His Messianic entry into the capital in meekness and lowliness, while the people cried Hosanna till the streets rang. Then, as He entered the Temple precincts, and the sound of the men's voices died away outside, the children within took up the cry, and for the last time the House of God rang with the praise of Jesus. They paid the last public homage Jesus was to receive before His death, and at the same time they passed the first public censure on His murderers. On the one side were the priests and Pharisees, now united in hatred against Jesus, and storming at this Hosanna; and on the other side the children full of admiration and love for the Master. Which had spiritual understanding and insight—the rulers or the children? It was taken for granted that day that it was the rulers, and they demanded that the foolish children's mouths should be stopped. Everyone knows to-day that the children were wiser than the ancients, and Jesus declared that God had opened their mouths. Between them and their fathers there was this difference, that they had imagination because their hearts were still simple, and the old men had lost theirs because they were proud and worldly. Children are not the slaves of circumstances; they make circumstances serve them. With a pool of water they have an ocean, with a scrap of wood a ship, with a handful of pebbles a crew, and then come distant voyages and romantic adventures. They see what eye hath not seen, they hear what ear hath not heard. The rulers saw a Galilean carpenter, poor and unlearned, and they despised Him; their children saw grace and goodness, and they loved Him. Before the fathers had begun to cry "Cru-

cify Him, crucify Him," the children had encompassed him with Hosannas, and in their judgment the race unites. For Christianity may be regarded as a creed, with reasoned dogmas; or as a worship, with beautiful rites; or as an ethic, with elevated principles: it is first of all and last of all a sublime emotion, and he understands our Faith best, and stands highest in our ranks, who has the child-heart.

Chapter XXI: The Twelve

DURING the early period of Jesus' ministry He created much stir among the crowd which waited on the Baptist, and among the religious circles in Jerusalem, in Nazareth and the highlands of Galilee, in Capernaum and by the lake shore. A considerable number of people became more or less attached to the Master and acknowledged Him as their teacher, but theirs was a guarded and uncertain allegiance. They did not recast their life, nor set themselves against the Pharisees, nor commit themselves to all Jesus' ideas, nor identify themselves with His cause. They were simply His hearers, His admirers, His well-wishers, His congregation. Some grew into His intimate personal friends, others turned into His enemies. Jesus set a modest value on this following; to Him it was simply a field for selection. He studied these unfledged disciples, He had private interviews with them; He formed His idea of their character, and weighed their powers. As a builder picking out his chief stones, as an explorer collecting his staff, as a general choosing his forlorn hope, Jesus moved among this mass of raw material. His plan was not to collect a multitude of adherents whom He could very imperfectly teach, but to find a few elect

souls, who would be more even than disciples and ambassadors, who would be so many separate centres of His thought and life, so that His society should increase not by addition but by multiplication. When the Master was satisfied that He had found the men, He put forth His great deliverance—the Sermon on the Mount, and called the "Twelve Apostles."

When one thinks of the enterprise to be committed to their hands, and considers the low estate of the Twelve, his feeling is amazement and disappointment. If the apostles, on whose capacity will hang the success of the new endeavour, must be taken from the Jews of the homeland, surely Jesus could have done better for His kingdom. Were there no men of standing and education, who had enough faith in Jesus and enough devotion to religion to undertake this high office? Was the Master entirely shut up to fishermen? and would we think it wise to begin an enterprise of the first order with such leaders in our day? And in asking those questions one is thinking of the college of apostles Jesus might have chosen. Why should He not have called Nicodemus, who was a master of Israel, and brought so candid a mind one night to Jesus? Surely he had been a better theologian than those unlearned Galileans. Beside him might have stood that high-minded and ingenuous young ruler, who could not in the end have refused Jesus, and that nameless scholar who asked such wise and honest questions that the Master declared him to be not far from the Kingdom of God. Jairus, the ruler of the Synagogue, whose little daughter Jesus raised from the dead, might have been added, and the college of apostles would have begun with four theologians, students trained in doctrine and speculation. And for men of affairs, why not Joseph of Arimathea?—surely he had been a more faithful treasurer than Judas Iscariot—and the nobleman of Cana whose son Jesus healed? and Manaen, Herod's foster-brother, who appears as a Christian

in the Acts, and the good man of Galilee, whom Jesus used as father in the Parable of the Prodigal Son? Was that far-seeing master, Gamaliel, quite inaccessible to Jesus, if Jesus had set Himself to win his allegiance? Was not Saul then a student in Jerusalem, and might he not have been saved the years of unbelief and bigotry which he afterwards so bitterly regretted? And the host of the "Upper Room," and that gentle soul, Lazarus, who was well-known in Jerusalem? So the Master would have had twelve apostles, whom the nation would have trusted, and whom the council could not have flouted.

It seems an ideal list; and then we remember that the situation, on a smaller scale, has often occurred, and this particular ideal has always failed. On the one side was the work to be done, and on the other men to do it as if they had been created for it. They had a commanding position in society; they had rich gifts of culture; they had gracious manners; they enjoyed the favour of the people; they had given pledges of capacity in other fields. Why should they not do this great thing in social reform, or in the cause of missions, or in the charitable service of Christ's Body? Many of this class are friendly to the Master and acknowledge the benefits they have received at His hand. Some are willing to aid His cause with gifts of money, and to lend it a cautious countenance. But one thing they will not do — identify themselves with Jesus' kingdom heartily and unreservedly; and why? Because this would mean contact with humble people and unfashionable associations, because it might entail the polite contempt of critical and superior people. Those desirable men have not the intellectual and moral courage to take the last step, which is the pledge of thoroughness and loyalty, and so they are useless for our Master's purposes. They may be the chorus of Jesus— when He succeeds; they cannot be His coworkers in the

struggle. Once for all Jesus put the matter to the test when He invited the young ruler to leave all and follow Him, and the very man for Jesus' service refused. What happened in Galilee happens in every age; if we take the drudgery of the Christian service—not its fads and fashions—we shall find that the people who have the heart to face and do it are plain men, not dilettante triflers, and to them will belong the glory when the history of the kingdom is written, and every man receives according to his work. Nicodemus would be tempted to regard John—a Galilean fisherman—with some condescension that night; but if it were not for John, we had not heard of Nicodemus; and Gamaliel, from his scholarly retreat, would pity the enthusiast who followed Jesus; but after ages have pitied Gamaliel, that timid opportunist. Because rabbis and rulers were too cautious or hostile to be His apostles, the Master chose twelve poor, obscure men, and now they sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

It is not, however, to be thought that because Jesus could not obtain scholars, and therefore chose peasants, that His cause thereby suffered loss. Were one building a church, it might seem a noble gift to place at his disposal the carved remains of a classical temple; it would really be a snare and an embarrassment. As they stand these stones will be useless, since they were cut for another order of architecture, and their design is deeply impressed. Even if recarved, there would remain a suggestion of alien curves and obliterated traceries. Better, after all, to select virgin stones from the quarry, and on their unoccupied surface imprint the new pattern. Would Nicodemus ever have been so utterly receptive of Jesus as John was? Would Joseph of Arimathea have been as obedient as Matthew? The missionaries of the Cross would have been apt to mix the theology of the rabbis with the religion of Jesus. And was it of much importance that the apostles should be distinguished

either in knowledge or rank? Was it not their function to be Jesus' witnesses—not to defend or expound Him, but to declare the Master,—to let the world know what He was and what He did? For this duty were needed simplicity, honesty, faith, and affection, and these were exceeding abundant in the apostles.

Are we even obliged to conclude that in the matter of mental endowment the apostles count for little, or that the Master would have fared better with twelve scholars of Jerusalem? Learning may not be ability: some scholars are fatuous for any practical purpose. Position is not power, it may be only wind and bombast. You may give a man the benefit of the whole machinery of education, and he may turn out an incapable. You may find a man who is destitute of culture, and yet has shrewdness and force to manage great affairs. Are we not bound to believe that, from the circle of His disciples, a considerable number, Jesus chose the men of spiritual genius, and that in all Galilee there could not be found twelve abler men? Has the world produced a profounder mystic than St. John? and could any cause have had a bolder leader than St. Peter at the day of Pentecost? St. Matthew accumulated, with much accuracy, the materials for what is the basal Gospel. The insight of a chief leader is shown by his discovery and choice of unknown genius; Jesus gave to the apostles their opportunity, and they justified His discernment unto all ages.

No doubt it may seem on the first glance as if we know next to nothing of the twelve apostles save St. John and St. Peter, and that ten at least are only a group of faces without character or individuality; but we come to another view after a little study. By-and-by, as the eye rests on the picture and its points come into relief, one begins to do justice to the countenances in the picture. Going from one to another, we discover that they are not so many strokes meant to suggest a face, or the

same face repeated with the slightest variation twelve times, but that, as in one of the best groups of sacred art, say a Giotto, this artist has conceived the character of each man, and given us, not so many persons to be counted, but so many friends to be known. We linger now, as it were, over the pose of the figure, the gesture of the hands, the expression in the eyes—identifying the type of character, supplying the incidents, writing the biography. We begin with twelve names, and, with the expense of some slight attention, we can conclude with twelve men. According to the arrangement of the Gospels the apostles fall into three groups, each containing four members. The first consists of two pairs of brothers, viz., John the disciple whom Jesus loved, and his brother James, the first martyr of the apostolic band, who were men of spiritual ideals and high spirit, as became the sons of Salome and kinsmen of the Master, and who were fitly named the sons of thunder. The second pair are Simon, whom, on the first sight of him, Jesus named a rock for the hidden strength which was in him, and who is yet to vindicate his name; and his brother Andrew, a man of energy and courage, who found Jesus for himself, and then sought out his greater brother Simon. These were counted two and two by blood, and all four by character, resolute and forceful, the front rank men and leaders of the apostolate.

The second group is made up of men with gifts which are distinct and necessary. Two had the faculty of business, which is accurate and orderly, which is at home with figures and facts, to which a comparison, say of prophecies and fulfilments, is dear,—shrewd and capable managers. They are Matthew, the publican of Capernaum, whose training as a government official is seen in the carefulness of his first Gospel, and Philip, whose matter-of-factness was a wholesome element in the apostolic atmosphere. Their two brethren of this group were at the other extreme, contributing a certain

spirit of just criticism and affectionate sentiment, men whose reason suggested many doubts, but whose hearts were charged with love. They are Nathanael, or Bartholomew, who did not believe that any good thing should come out of Nazareth, but, after one interview with Jesus, acknowledged Him the Son of God; and Thomas, who was an agnostic by nature, but passionately devoted to the Master. None of these four could have led, because they had not the high spirit and daring, nor the brilliancy and originality of men of the first order; but they had each an independent talent of a marked kind and had each a marked individuality.

Four remain to make the last group, and they have a common likeness to begin with, although one was to be separated from the others by a bridgeless gulf. They are James, sometimes called the Less; and Judas, not Iscariot, whose enquiry of the Master in the Upper Room how He would reveal Himself to His own and not to the world suggests a narrow Jewish attitude; and Simon the Zealot, whose title shows that this apostle belonged to the extreme patriotic party in the nation, which would have been willing to take up arms against the Romans, and the last was Judas of Kerioth, who seems to have been a Judean and to have had some acquaintance with the rulers in Jerusalem. These were men of limited but clear vision, who knew what they believed, and were ready to stand by their belief. They were thorough-going partisans—one being an exception—representing the body of the society, which will follow its chiefs whithersoever they lead. And these were the twelve apostles.

Upon these men was laid a task without parallel—the propagation of the supreme religion of the world; but never in the history of education had pupils such a supreme advantage, for they spent, say, two years in the intimate society of Jesus. They not only heard the great discourse on the Mount,

but they also learned from many a conversation, as the Master and the disciples journeyed along the roads of Galilee, how these principles were to be applied to life. With the multitude they were present when the Master gave the Parables of the Kingdom, and when the multitude had departed they received their explanation. When the Master from time to time reduced the Pharisees to confusion, or showed unto an anxious soul the way of life everlasting, they stood by. He sent them on experimental missions, He taught them to pray, giving the very words for their use; He allowed them to hear Him pray; He travelled with them, ate and drank with them, and gave unto those favoured men all the privileges of friendship. But the chief service the Master rendered unto the apostles was the culture of their character. It was needful that those simple, enthusiastic, and undisciplined natures should be deepened and clarified, and from the training of Jesus one gathers what He considered the chief qualities for religious service.

The first is hardness, and this was enforced in one of the most vivid incidents in Jesus' private life. Two of His disciples had inherited to the full the high and patriotic spirit of their mother Salome, and both John and James had flung themselves into the cause of Jesus without reserve. So simple was their faith that they expected the kingdom to be immediately established in all its glory, and, as men of Jesus' blood, they considered that they ought to have precedence of strangers. With their mother, John and James made an open request that in the coming distribution of honours they should have the chief places—thrones, one on Jesus' right hand and the other on His left. Jesus did not rebuke this request with severity, for it contained the desire of a mother's heart, and the ambition was not of this world. What condemned this womanlike prayer was its unconscious selfishness, and its ignorance of the principles of spiritual service. Was the Kingdom of God

to be another scramble—for thrones; and if so, what of Peter and Andrew? If there be rewards, they must be bestowed, not through influence, but by merit; not upon the men who ask first, but upon them who have done most. Thrones were not *largesse*, which Jesus could distribute among His friends; they were honours inseparably connected with actions, which must be given to the fit, which cannot be given to the unfit; or, as Jesus puts it, they shall be theirs for whom they are prepared. There was only one road to a throne, and it was the way of the Cross; the apostles would obtain their thrones exactly as Jesus obtained His—by suffering. They must be baptised with His baptism, and drink of His cup; they must be willing to be hated and cast out; for the first condition of all success is that a man be not soft or slack, but that he toil and endure, and so his throne shall come to him without begging, without his thinking. James obtained the first throne of the twelve, and it was conferred on him by the headsman's sword; and his brother received the last, and he reached it through great tribulation.

Another quality of apostleship was single-heartedness, and by that is meant that work be done from the highest motives. The worker may be mercenary in any department, doing his work not for love of it but for his wages; and this is the cause of bad art and bad literature, of rotten business and dishonest politics. The curse is heaviest in religion. Within religion a calculating spirit pollutes the blood at its spring, and Jesus was on His guard lest this spirit should affect His disciples, since they had made sacrifices, and were not quite unconscious of their heroism. When the young ruler concluded that, for the time at least, he could not afford to join Jesus' company, Peter's interest was excited. If that disciple would have had so great a recompense, how would it be with themselves? "Master," said Peter, with much frankness, "we have left all and followed

Thee, what shall we have?" Half the unpleasantness of the question was redeemed by its simplicity, and Jesus assured His disciples that the bread they had cast on the waters would be found after many days; but He gave the Parable of the Hours to show that religion must not be regarded as a shrewd investment. Some may make a bargain with the owner of the vineyard, and for their toil and work they will receive a measured wage. Some may work for love's sake, and since they stand on grace, not law, the Vine-Master will bestow on them His most generous gifts. He who counts it the chief good of life to have worthy work to do will be satisfied at set of sun, for his spirit will have passed into his work and touched it with the beauty which is not of earth.

The Master also insisted on the quality of charity, and this was the more needful because the creed of the day had lost the reasonable spirit of the prophets, and because bigotry would be a tragic disqualification for the messengers of Jesus, who was the Friend of publicans and sinners, and made a detested Samaritan an example of religion. When John and James, with the characteristic instinct of religious jealousy, would have called down fire on a Samaritan village, Jesus was aghast at their ungodly spirit, and rebuked them sharply. They must understand once for all that Jesus had not come to be the head of another intolerant body like the Jewish Church, and to embark on a career of anathemas, but to be the heart of a spiritual communion which would include all good people everywhere. If fire is ever to be used, it will be by the servants and not by the Master, and it is therefore a satisfaction to know that of all the fire which has been lighted against heretics none has come from heaven.

Without another quality the apostles had been useless for their office, and that is humility. All His ministry Jesus was preaching a lowly heart, and yet, on the night of His farewell, the

disciples had not learned the lesson. With the shadow of their Master's death already upon their souls, and at a time when petty rivalries might well have been forgotten, they revived a standing dispute as to who should be greatest. It was the becoming habit of the company, who were servants one of another, that one should wash his brethren's feet when they entered their lodging, but none would see the basin and water at the door of the Upper Room. They passed and sat down with uneasy manner and uncleansed feet, avoiding the Master's eye, who rose at last and did for them all, from John to Judas, what in their childishness none of them would do for his brother. They refused to humble themselves because they were so little; He condescended because He was so great. And with this last telling parable, wherein the cool water blistered their callous feet, Jesus taught the disciples that neither faith nor charity would avail anything without humility, and that the chief in the Christian society would be the servant who rendered the lowliest service to his fellow-men.

Chapter XXII: Three Interviews

IT is recorded of Jesus in the fourth Gospel that "He knew what was in man," and the Gospels are a commentary on the unerring personal insight of the Master. He estimated each man's character, He read each man's thoughts, He prophesied each man's action. He did not overvalue effusive loyalty — putting men to severe tests who declared that they would follow Him whithersoever He went. He did not discourage genuine humility — bidding Mary Magdalene go in peace. If He was betrayed, at least He was not disappointed — He anticipated the treachery of Judas. If He seemed to trust too fondly, in the end He was not disappointed — St. Peter did bravely before His day was done. The poor bravado of the social outcasts did not hide their bitter regret from Jesus, and the dishonest zeal of the Pharisees did not atone for their profound unreality. When any one's faith was weak, Jesus fostered it; and if it were strong, He tried it. No group of Pharisees could murmur together but He knew what they were saying, and put them to confusion. A few of His disciples could not discuss the meaning of His words without His marking their perplexity, and giving them light. He made no mistake in any of His judgments, He had

no failure in any of His dealings. And from among His many interviews, with as many types of men, these stand out conspicuous, convincing, final.

(*a*) The first was with a critic, who illustrated that state of mind without prejudice or insincerity, which desires to believe, and only asks for sufficient evidence. Nathanael lived on his land at Cana, and gave himself to thought and study. He stood apart from the dogmatists of Jerusalem, for to this man's candid nature the wire-drawn arguments and crass bigotry of the Pharisees were an offence. He stood apart also from the movement of the Baptist, for to this man's refinement the excitement of the multitude was alien. He was as earnest about religion as any young man who hurried up from Galilee and hung upon the lips of the Baptist — far more real than the viper brood who came out from Jerusalem and hated the Prophet. But the character of a man's religion depends on the form into which his nature has been run, and the providences which have shaped his life; and each man must be true to himself in this matter of religion, neither imitating nor judging his neighbour. St. John went to the Jordan because there was quiet there; and Philip, Nathanael's friend, went because there was a multitude. One was a mystic, another was a man of affairs; but Nathanael was a quiet, modest, diffident, questioning person, and he stayed at home.

As the question of the Messiah filled the air, Nathanael was as busy with the quest of the day under his fig tree as the eager crowd which argued round the Baptist; but he used a critical apparatus to arrive at the truth. While John Baptist laid the fear of God upon the people, Nathanael in his study was gathering what was written about the Messiah in Holy Scripture, accumulating, comparing, reconciling evidence, and creating a portrait which would satisfy his reason, and by which he could identify the Coming One. He is not for an instant to be

confounded with that noisy and irritating class who are proud of their cleverness and their scraps of knowledge, and their jingling logic, and their freedom from all convictions. Between a sceptic and a critic there is this immense difference, that the former demands evidence which cannot be given, and the other only waits for trustworthy evidence to yield full rejoicing faith. Nathanael is the representative of a class of men, to be found in all ranks and places, but chiefly among the educated and quiet folk in their retreats, who have not found the Christ, but who would give all they possess to see His face. They read every book and weigh every argument: they say no word against faith, and envy every one who believes; but whatever they lose they are determined not to lose a good conscience, and whatever they suffer they will not suffer the charge of hypocrisy.

Nathanael was so fortunate as to have a man of affairs for his friend, whom Jesus took possession of by a word, and it is refreshing to read how Philip bethought himself at once of the student busy seeking the Messiah among his books; how he carried the news of his own discovery to Cana with overflowing confidence; and how he anticipated the immediate satisfaction of Nathanael. How pathetic is it also to imagine the wistful eagerness of the guileless spirit to receive the glad news, the perplexity which clouded Nathanael's face as he heard of Nazareth, and the sad conclusion that this new prophet, who had satisfied uncritical Philip, could not be the Messiah. It was impossible that he should come from that disreputable Nazareth, and contrary to the word of prophets. And yet is the question of Jesus to be settled by ancient books and theological arguments? Does it count for nothing that honest Philip has seen Him and been taken captive? Are personal testimony and experience to be ruled out of court? There are times when the sword of common sense cuts the meshes of reasoning, and it was nothing else than an inspiration when

Philip advised his learned, speculative, conscientious friend to see Jesus for himself.

It may seem as if Nathanael passed over swiftly from reasonable doubt to enthusiastic faith, but this transition was a great tribute to Jesus' skill and understanding. The Master did not invite a discussion on Nazareth, nor cite quotations from the Prophets. What good had been gained by an academical victory over Nathanael? Jesus went to the root of religion, and answered the deepest demand in that heart. Can any one unravel the tangled skein of my thoughts, and feel the force of my temptations, and fulfil the best desires of my soul? Can he explain me to myself? Then he shall be my master, and I shall be his disciple. This is the position of the honest soul, and Jesus answered Nathanael's unuttered prayer. As the patriarch Jacob had wrestled until daybreak to know the name of God, Jesus declares Nathanael a better Jacob,—an Israelite with Jacob's desire, and without Jacob's guile. And when the good man acknowledges the Divine power which had read his heart and life, and accepts Jesus as the King of Israel, Jesus assures him that this is only the beginning of revelation and that the same Who has explained Nathanael to himself will reveal God also to him, and that, like Jacob in his dream, this guileless soul will yet see the heavens opened, and the angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man. And that was how Jesus made a critic into a disciple. He satisfied him.

(*b*) The second interview was with a formalist, who was the most honest Pharisee Jesus met, and it took place on the Master's first visit to Jerusalem. Among the ruling classes there was at least one man who gave a friendly hearing to Jesus. He held high rank in the council of the nation and had a reputation for theology, and might have been inaccessible to new ideas. One may be sure that Nicodemus would miss a cer-

JESUS AND NICODEMUS

Even so must the Son of man be lifted up!— John, III. 14.

tain academic flavour in Jesus' speech dear unto scholars, and that his ecclesiastical reverence would be shocked at Jesus' iconoclasm. Still it remains that one honest man recognises another, and an earnest seeker is ever ready to welcome truth. The Master had the note of sincerity, and Nicodemus was irresistibly attracted. For years he had been weary of empty rites, hackneyed phrases, barren methods; he craved for reality, and Jesus was real. If there was a secret of truth, this young provincial had it, and Nicodemus determined to have an interview with Jesus. Had he been a private person — a mere fisherman of Galilee he had simply followed Jesus along the street and gone openly with him into His lodgings; the obscure are always disguised. For Nicodemus to accompany Jesus from the Temple might have created a sensation which would have been most hateful to his temperament and led to unprofitable gossip. Besides his scholarly dislike to vulgar notoriety he was bound to consider the effect his action would have on his colleagues, with whom he was bound to act in concert, and on the public, who looked to him for guidance. An irresponsible person might be rash without danger; from him Jerusalem had a right to expect caution and gravity. It may be allowed, as the fourth Evangelist suggests, that fear had something to do with the expedient of Nicodemus. Nothing is more common than the union of physical courage which despises pains, with intellectual cowardice which refuses light; and of physical cowardice which shrinks from pain, with intellectual courage which is afraid of no truth. Of the latter type was Nicodemus, the Erasmus of Jesus' day. His habits made him timid, and he missed the high place which might have been his; but he was honest, and his bravery grew with practice, so that in the end he was one of the faithful few who laid the Master to rest.

St. John seems to have had a house in the capital, and there most likely Jesus and Nicodemus met in the stillness of night,

with no sound to disturb save the spring wind blowing down the street, with no witness save John, quiet, watchful, sympathetic, standing in the shadow of the room. They present a vivid and suggestive contrast; the old rabbi, pallid, thought-worn, weary, the type of that which has grown old and is ready to vanish away; and the young prophet, the child of the open air, with the light of hope upon his face, representing that which is to be. It was the day of transition, and it could not pass without suffering, for the old man's heart would almost break before he closed the door on the venerable and pious traditions of the past which had been his faith; and, before Jesus had finally opened the gate of the new, His hands would be pierced with nails. So in this humble place the old and the new met face to face, and through the open window entered the wind of God. With his first words Nicodemus reveals his position, and one is struck by the immense difference between the old and the new. Nicodemus acknowledges at once that Jesus is a rabbi, and that He has Divine sanction, which was very candid and generous, and thus it is evident that after this courteous opening he proposed to discuss the idea of the Kingdom of God on the lines of Jewish history. Jesus anticipates this futility, and interrupts the smooth flow of the good rabbi's speech with one of His most startling sayings: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, unless a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God." Nicodemus began with one idea of religion, and Jesus with another. To the Jewish scholar religion was the acceptance of dogma, the observance of ritual, the performance of good works, with the conventional view of God as a judicial and national Deity. To the Galilean Prophet religion was an intuition of goodness, a spirit of sonship, a service of liberty with God as the universal Father, spiritual, compassionate, beneficent. Unto Nicodemus religion was a rule; to Jesus it was a life, and one could only shift from the one

position to the other by an inspiration from above. How often had Nicodemus desired to escape from his environment, of which he was weary, with its words, forms, unreality, and find himself in a new, fresh, real world! as if an old man, grey, bloodless, shrivelled, should be born again, and begin life with the wonder, trust, and gladness of a little child. This vague longing Nicodemus had cherished beneath his formalism, but had put aside as a dream; and now Jesus had come to confirm the secret expectation of his soul. This was how a doctrinaire passed into a disciple. Jesus emancipated him.

The third interview was with a sinner, Zaccheus, a chief publican in Jericho: and had one of us been in the town when Jesus passed through, he had been apt to suspect that there were two men called Zaccheus, with the most remarkable physical likeness and the most extreme moral unlikeness. A Pharisee would give an exceedingly discouraging biography of Zaccheus; that he had prosecuted a disreputable business with brazen effrontery, and had accumulated a fortune out of the sufferings of the poor; that he had been guilty of many acts of gross injustice, and that he associated with the most abandoned people; that he never attended the synagogue; and that, as he, the Pharisee, had reason to believe, he led a wicked life. And all this the Pharisee believed, for this was the only Zaccheus the Pharisee knew. When Jesus caught the look in the publican's face, and remembered what he had heard of him, He saw another Zaccheus, who had once cherished the enthusiastic dreams of youth and had been forced by circumstances into an unfortunate business; who had allowed himself to do many things which filled him with disgust, and who winced under the ostracism of society; who could not cross the door of the synagogue because he had been excommunicated, and who had flown in the face of conventional religion because conventional people had insulted his wife and children; who would have

given all he had to win the good opinion of his fellow-men, and who longed for some one to hold out a helping hand to him. This was the Zaccheus Jesus knew.

For years the religious people of Jericho had been doing all they knew with Zaccheus and they had made a poor business of their efforts at salvation. They had tried advice, denunciation, ostracism, excommunication, in vain: one plan they had not thought of, and that was believing in Zaccheus. This was the original idea of Jesus, who did not preach at Zaccheus, but instead thereof asked his hospitality. He could have stayed at any house in Jericho; He went to the house of a man who had been put in the pillory and pelted for a generation. When the Master said, "Zaccheus, come down, I must abide at thy house to-day," the publican heard the Gospel for the first time, and saw the clouds break above his head. One man trusted him, and that Man Jesus of Nazareth. As Jesus went along the street with him under the reproach of the people, as the Master spake kindly to His host, who had never received a gracious word in his life from a good man, as the Friend of women and children gives gentle, respectful greeting to Zaccheus' family, the heart of Zaccheus melted within him. Jesus had treated him as if he were the most honourable, generous and upright man in Jericho. This, God knew, he had not been; but this, with God's help, he was going to be. "Lord, the half of my goods I now give to the poor." Jesus had not asked him. "If I have wronged any man, this day shall I return him fourfold." Jesus had not suggested such misdeeds. Before the charity of the Master the chains of avarice, and dishonesty, and pride, and bitterness broke, and Zaccheus stood a free man before God and his fellow-men. This was God's Zaccheus. Who had been right, the Pharisee or Jesus, in their judgment or their method? "Behold him," said Jesus in the triumph of grace, "he also is a son of Abraham." And so Jesus saved a sinner by believing in him.

Chapter XXIII: Twenty-four Hours with Jesus

THERE are times when we are inclined to complain of the Gospels because they are so brief, so reserved, so incomplete. Why not every word Jesus spake to His disciples, to the Pharisees, to the people — for each syllable of the Master had been gold — instead of these few selected sayings? Why not everything He did, how He walked along the field paths of Galilee, how He looked as He received the children into His arms, how He carried Himself in Zaccheus' house — a hundred touches of expression, gesture, manner? Why not every one of His mighty works — each person healed in the crowds who waited on Him and were healed? Was not each an evidence, a parable, a gospel? From our distance we grudge the parsimony of these good Evangelists, or the limitations of their memory, or the selection of the traditions, by which we are tantalised and impoverished.

Other times we are tempted to complain because the Gospels are so rapid, so comprehensive, so luxuriant. Parable follows parable, each one more attractive and pregnant than the last; miracle crowds on miracle, so that we are dazed with astonishment. Jesus confounds Pharisees, instructs His disciples, and

blesses children within one hour. We pant after Him from the Jordan to Cana, from Cana to Capernaum and Nazareth, from Nazareth to Capernaum, from Capernaum to Jerusalem, afraid to loiter lest we should lose some word, miss some work. We are like travellers by one of the high level railways, who are torn between opposite views, and have not time to see either; like visitors to the Pitti, who are lost in a gallery where all are masterpieces; we are whirled breathless through beauty; we are in despair over our riches. Our eyes are dazzled so that we cannot see clearly, and His disciples had been almost willing to surrender those years of splendid affluence for one day which they could store in their imagination, and make their own—four and twenty hours in the life of Jesus.

We have a choice of single days, and the supreme day of Jesus' life was the last; but after that high place of agony and victory, perhaps the best for a disciple's purpose is a certain day in the Galilean ministry, where we can follow the Master's work from sunset to sunset. We shall then know how He gave Himself in life as much as in death, and how He did His Father's will; we shall be able to imagine the wealth of sacrifice and the immense charities which are not told.

Upon the previous day the Master had been teaching in parables, and had traced the evolution of the kingdom of God from the seed cast into the ground, through its growth and conflict, enlarging also on its beauty and value, to its cleansing and perfection in the dragnet. After the people had reluctantly dispersed, and He was alone with His disciples by the lake side, Jesus expounded to them the inwardness of those parables, since they were to be the stewards of the Divine mysteries. Nothing, neither physical toil nor bodily pain, is more utterly exhausting than a great spiritual deliverance; it strains the mind almost to the breaking, and creates a passionate longing for rest. As the people were still waiting in the distance, in hope

of more, and Jesus could not have quiet in Capernaum, He asked Peter to take Him over to the other side of the lake, where He could be alone. The sun had set when the boat put out from the shore, and Jesus fell sound asleep in the afterpart of the boat, where some kindly hand had laid a pillow for His head. After dark there came one of those sudden, confused storms which lash inland lakes into fury, and which make steering almost useless. The water began to fill the undecked boat, and they were in danger of being swamped. They lost their nerve in the gusty darkness, and fell into a panic as they imagined themselves sinking within a short distance of home, and perishing in their own loved lake. They were amazed that the Master should sleep unmoved by the wind and waves, and they awaked Him with reproaches, as if they could perish and He be safe. So dependent had those disciples become on the Master that they now turned to Him in every strait, and even on their own fishing-ground looked to Him for deliverance. He rose, unamazed and unalarmed, Whom no commotion of nature or of man could shake, and commanded peace, and there was a great calm; but it may be that the calm was greater in the terrified souls of the disciples than in the waters of the fickle lake. Through the night they had been tossed and driven; now, as the sun's first rays strike the lake, they come in quiet waters to the eastern shore.

The blue water and green slopes were bathed in fresh morning light, but the Master met, on landing, a storm sadder and wilder than any that could ever rage on the sea of Galilee. Among the rocks on the side of the hill were caves where the dead of Gergesa were laid, and in them lived a maniac whom none could control nor chains hold. Quiet nights he would spend in the tombs, holding ghoulish intercourse with the dead; but last night he had rushed to and fro on the heights, revelling in the black darkness and howling wind; welcoming

the storm in nature, which corresponded with that in his own tormented soul. This was the first person Jesus met, and the sight of the Master in His divine peace and holiness aroused the evil spirit to frenzy, for in those days, when Jesus was on earth, the eternal conflict between good and evil came to a height, with instinctive hatred on both sides, shuddering repulsions, fierce agonies, beyond our imagination, who live in days when the fires of the spiritual world burn low and the frontiers between the two worlds of darkness and light are not sharply defined. Within this miserable being there was a double consciousness — two spirits, one of which appealed in silence by that half-human face, that squalid body, those rattling fetters, for deliverance; the other which fawned and did homage, and besought Jesus to depart. These two — the beast man and the God man — which are in us all in measure, Jesus came to separate, and His first act this morning, Who last night had caused the windy tempest to cease on the lake, was to call forth the devil from this unhappy man, that he might go in peace to his home, healed and sane. No conflict of spiritual forces like this, sharp and decisive, can take place without affecting the outer world. Between man and the lower creation there is a sympathy so constant and sensitive that animals respond to our moods — as, for instance, a horse which is panic-stricken if its rider has lost his head, or which is soothed by its rider's calmness. A herd of swine were feeding on the steep slope of the hill, and, at the piercing shrieks of the madman, were seized with one of those sudden unmanageable frenzies to which those crass, unlovely but very nervous creatures are subject, and, in spite of their keepers' hopeless efforts, dashed in one stream of terror into the lake, and there, as swine cannot save themselves by swimming, and as they would be piled one above another, they were drowned. It was natural in that age, when such sights were to be seen

and so little was known of their meaning, that the keepers (and the disciples also) should suppose that Jesus had sent the spirit of evil from the man into the swine, and that they should hurry with a sensational account to the people of Gergesa. One can also understand that the owners were not particularly pleased to hear of the loss of their herd, but it is very disappointing to find that when it came to be a choice between the presence of Jesus and the safety of swine, they literally besought the Master to return whither He had come. For the Gergesenes were the type of that large class in all ages to whose lives Jesus has brought disturbance, and who would purchase unholy living by His absence. So Jesus, exiled this time for His mercy, as sometimes He was for His doctrine, took boat, still early in the day, and, with a favourable wind, sailed to Capernaum.

The effect of yesterday had not departed, and the report of his return brought a multitude to the shore who received him gladly, and passed one to another the miracle of Gergesa. Accompanied by the admiring people, with here and there a jealous, wrathful Pharisee, Jesus went to His lodging at Peter's house. He was obliged again to preach, standing in a room, while His hearers filled the house, and overflowed into the street. As the Master went through the town with the glory of this new miracle upon Him, four neighbours, speaking together at some corner, were visited with a sudden inspiration. They had a friend who, as was well known in Capernaum, had sown his wild oats with prodigal hand and was now reaping their bitter harvest in his body as well as his soul. Stricken with palsy, this man, once strong and lustful, now lay in his decrepitude an object of contempt to himself, of pity to the town. With all his faults he had been good-natured, like many of his kind, and ready to help others in the days of his strength; so his friends desired to do a good turn to him. If Jesus could

cast out a raving demon from a Gergesene, why should He not restore manhood to this wreck in Capernaum. Four of them, all men of their hands, 'tis nothing for them, and each holding one corner of his bed, they carry him to Jesus' home. The abject is mightily touched by their kindness and begins to hope, so that their faith creates faith in him. It is easier, however, to reach the house than to reach the Master, for the crowd block the doorway, and the five are reduced to despair. One, quicker witted than his fellows, has an original idea, and charity is ever indebted to genius for devising new methods. If it be impossible to approach Jesus by the door, why not through the roof? No crowd is standing there, and the outer stair is ready for their use. With an effort they land their patient on the height; they remove the slight ceiling of the room, and even while the Master is preaching the sick man is let down before His face and four eager faces expect the result, while the helplessness of the sufferer is His prayer. This was prayer without words, silent, certain, exacting, irresistible. Jesus closed his address at that moment, and a silence fell on the company. "Son," said the Master with much tenderness, as He looked on the wistful face, "Be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." Was it for this his friends had laid him there? Was this what he desired? Very likely not; but our Master gives more than we ask or expect, and Jesus let them know that day that the root of all misery is sin. Jesus did many things for the body, and He was going to restore the tides of vigour to this miserable, but first He must cure his soul. "Forgive" is a far greater word than "rise," so divine indeed that the Pharisees had already begun to whisper "blasphemy" within their hearts. "So ye think that I have no right to forgive sins," He said, taking their secret thought before it came to words. "Let me give you a sign which may convince you." And, behold, at the command of Jesus, the palsied man arose, a man again before God and his

brethren, and lifted up his bed, and they made a passage for him and he passed through their midst and went home, while the crowd lifted up their voices in glory to God Who had given such power to men.

The broken sermon could not be continued, and Jesus left the house, that He might go to the lake and rest beside its coolness at noontide of the day; but for Him that day there could be no rest till the darkness fell. His presence was ever creating new situations; His grace involved Him in unexpected labours. On His way to the shore Jesus passes the local customhouse, and He sees the publican sitting in his open office. The crowd fling glances of hatred and contempt on him; good Pharisees cross the street to avoid contamination; but Matthew does not heed them; he is looking for Jesus, and in the scattering of the people the Master's eyes and his meet. Since Jesus had begun to preach at Capernaum this publican had been a constant hearer, standing on the outskirts of the crowd or hiding himself in some corner that he might catch the first words of true religion which had now fallen on his ears. Between him and Jesus there had also been some private conferences, when he had asked certain questions and the Master had made plain to him the way of life. To-day Jesus saw that Matthew had made up his mind, and was waiting for the word of invitation. His decision would be final, and it had better be known to all. Jesus stood opposite the detested receipt of custom and commanded Matthew, with His note of spiritual authority, "Follow Me"; and with dramatic completeness, as showing in a sign his utter obedience, Matthew left everything that hour and cast in his lot with Jesus. As this outcast stood in the road beside his new Lord, chosen and called, the Pharisees in their outer circle would criticise and murmur, but to-day Matthew is oblivious through joy. As he sees a new, clean, unselfish life opening up before him he has only one desire ungratified, and that is that Jesus

should come to his house to celebrate this chief event in his life. The Master had gone to dine with Simon the Pharisee, would He accept hospitality from Matthew the publican? It must needs be a hastily prepared feast, since he had not anticipated the event of the day, but it would be a great feast for the guests that would be there, and to their joy, Jesus went home with Matthew. Every publican in Capernaum was there, and every good thing which could be got was laid on the table in honour of Jesus, Who had other treatment from His host than Simon gave; but Jesus had meat to eat that day they knew not of as He looked on Matthew and his friends.

From the outside a group of Pharisees watched the scene and snarled. Since they could not reach Jesus at the moment they tried to browbeat His disciples, who were sitting near the door and were plain men. "This Master of yours has strange ways. See Him now there between Matthew and that chief publican, and — is it possible? — eating out of the same dish. A fine prophet! What think you yourselves, you, John, Peter, James?" Jesus, Whom nothing escaped, heard the words and understood: He knew that the local Pharisees could easily perplex and daunt His fishermen, and He was not sorry to answer those Pharisees in the presence of the publicans. Why did He not go to them? for that was their suggestion. Because they did not want Him, and because He did them no good when He went. Was Simon hearing Him, or any of the men who had been at Simon's feast? Why did He come here? that was the question. Because He was made welcome, and because He was doing His appointed work: saving men from sin. Did they ever expect to see a religious teacher sitting as an honoured guest in a publican's house, and that publican leaving his gains to live the religious life? The Pharisees were silent. One controversy seemed to raise another, and now a few of John Baptist's disciples, encouraged by the presence of the Pharisees, asked their

question, and it was not without excuse. They had been trained in the Baptist's ascetic school, and had been taught the hardness of the religious life; they remembered their master's loneliness and severe habits; they had heard Jesus' joyful teaching, and seen His liberty of life; they now beheld Him at a publican's feast, and sharing in the festivity, and they were honestly perplexed. What a difference between the Messiah, if this were indeed the Messiah, and His forerunner! They spoke to Jesus, but they also shrank from a direct reflection on Himself. "Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but Thy disciples fast not?" With them and their question Jesus dealt very kindly, for He loved loyalty and He sympathised with their perplexity. "Do not grudge My disciples their brief joy; it will soon be over. By-and-by their bridegroom will depart (by the way of Calvary), and then John and Peter will be sad enough. Besides, your master had one message, and faithfully did he discharge it; I have another, and My word also must be fulfilled. Mine is new wine, and must be put in new bottles: wait a little, and it will grow mellow." The Baptist's disciples might criticise as they pleased; no friend of John could displease Jesus, Who admired that second Elias beyond all living men.

Life that day was to be a series of interruptions, so that Jesus had hardly begun to preach before He was compelled to heal, and could not raise a brother man without being put on his defence, and could not sit at a feast without explaining His mission. As He was reassuring John's anxious followers, another Pharisee has something of hot importance to say to Him. He is a chief man in the Church, and a magnate among religious people—Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue. As it happened, Jairus was not with his friends when they questioned Jesus' right to forgive sins, nor when they blamed Him for His presence in Matthew's house. No doubt he was on occasion a keen theologian, and took his share in controversy; but he happened

to have more serious concerns that day. All night, as Jesus tossed on the angry sea, a light was burning in Jairus' house, and a father, with a mother, was sitting by the couch of his little daughter — his one only daughter: had it been a boy it had been called her son — who was very ill, most likely of fever, the curse of the district, and not far from death. They hoped that joy might come in the morning, and the burning hand grow cool; but the merciless light revealed the signs upon the face which are the forerunners of death, and cannot be mistaken. Physicians and care of love can do no more, and the grief in the father's eye is answered by the mother's despair; and so they kept sad vigil as hour by hour life ebbed away. Was it a servant who heard the news of the mighty work in Peter's house, and saw the once palsied man go down the street carrying his bed, and suggested one physician more? If He did so much for a reprobate like that, whose sins were known to the town, what might Jesus not do for a little maid, since all said He loved children dearly? Perhaps the ruler might not care to ask a kindness of Jesus, Who was a heretic and condemned of the Pharisees — and yet, to save the life of the little maid! Why did the woman not tell sooner? what did she mean by stammering about heretics? Heretics! is this a day to stand on scruples? What are all the creeds, and customs, and synagogues, and Pharisees compared to love, and life, and my girl — Miriam was it or Ruth? Already Jairus has rushed from the house, and is running — yes, running. And where are his phylacteries? Left at home, forgotten, by this ruler of the synagogue. See, he speaks with that publican, so that their robes are mingling; he is making sure that Jesus is at Matthew's house, for not a moment must be lost. Some brother Pharisees catch him at the door, and begin to relate Jesus' last offence: but he is not interested in questions of religious manners; he has something of his own to say, and he must reach Jesus with-

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VIEW OF BETHLEHEM FROM EAST VALLEY

VIEW OF BETHLEHEM FROM EAST VALLEY

out delay. There Jesus is, beside Matthew, just as, a few weeks ago, he had seen Jesus sitting at Simon's table, only the Master is in a higher place. That scene comes up before him, and he sees the woman at Jesus' feet. She was a wise woman, and fared well that day. He will take her example—a ruler of the synagogue?—no, a father with an only daughter a dying, or—dead, perhaps now dead. He falls down, he worships—his friends called Jesus a blasphemer as he passed—and pleads his case. "My daughter, my only daughter, twelve years of age, on the point of death. If Thou wilt come and simply lay Thy hand upon her, she will live." Jesus had remained in His place through all the criticism on Himself; now in the sorrow of the ruler, He arose at once, and the people accompanied Him as He went to dispute with death the possession of Jairus' daughter. It might seem as if Jesus should have had free course on this errand of supreme need, but He must pay the penalty of His pity, and be retarded at every step by human calamities. In the thick of the crowd, as they passed through one of the narrow streets, a woman, grievously afflicted by a wasting disease of her sex and overcome by modesty, had courage only to touch the fringe of Jesus' outer garment, as it came for a moment within her reach. When He turned round and asked who touched Him, His disciples were astonished; they did not understand. Why, many touched Him! Not so. A score may press on one by accident, but the touch of a single finger will be different. It was with intention; it was individual; it was a prayer; it was a sign; it was a secret between two. This woman could not be hid; she was distinguished from the crowd first by her faith, and then by the Divine mercy. When the woman is healed, Jesus is again at liberty to proceed.

The pause could not have been five minutes, to one man it was five hours; and so near are joy and sorrow in human life that when the woman's heart was lightened with joy, a fool-

ish servant told Jairus that his little maid was dead, and that it was of no use to trouble the Master. With the alertness of one whose heart was beating in sympathy with every human being, Jesus heard the message, and bade Jairus to be of good cheer, for the hope of his heart was not to be disappointed. Death had stolen a march, and, already afraid, had hastened to strike; but he would make little of this audacity. Jairus must believe, and possess his soul in patience; he was not going to lose his daughter. And, with the crowd attending Him, Jesus moved on to the supreme conflict—between life and death. Already the women had begun the ceremony of wailing. Jesus commanded them to cease—they were celebrating the victory of death too soon; they might soon be needed for singing. Meanwhile they and the neighbours must leave the room where the maid was lying, for it was a solemn act to call back a soul from the other world. Only the parents and His three intimates among the twelve were present, when Jesus, stooping over the couch, said, in the kindly home-speech, as her father would have spoken, "You are sleeping too long, and we are wearying to see you smile on us all. Darling, arise!" Who could deny that gentleness? not Jairus' daughter. Who could resist that power? not Death, although he be a king. Obedient to the command of love, the dear child opened her eyes, and sat up, and the first face she saw was that of Jesus.

After this great encounter, which had crowned the labours of the day, Jesus set out for home; but even yet His work was not done, for blind men were waiting for His coming, so that His return journey to Peter's house was marked by miracles. And when He had reached its welcome shelter, exhausted in soul and body, there was brought to Him one who was afflicted with a dumb devil, and he also must be delivered. At last Jesus casts Himself on his poor couch and sleeps; but He had driven sleep from other homes for gladness of heart. Across

the lake a man in His senses is at home again; Matthew's heart is on fire, for the kingdom of God is come to him; a mother is thanking God because her prodigal son is forgiven and healed; again the light is burning in Jairus' house, where they are still rejoicing, for this day God has visited His people, and Capernaum has seen His salvation.

Chapter XXIV: The Home of Bethany

THE Gospels show us the Master in public, in the Temple of Jerusalem, in the High Priest's palace, in Pilate's Judgment Hall, on the green hill outside the gate, or on that other hill where He delivered His sermon, or in the meadow where He fed five thousand, or in the synagogue of Capernaum, or on the lake where the eager people crowded the shore. We see Him as a Prophet, Reformer, Teacher, Martyr, as the Messiah and Redeemer. But the same Gospels lift the veil from Jesus' private life, so that we know some of the houses where He found a home in the hard years of His ministry, and some of the friends who comforted His heart. There was one house in Cana where there would ever be a welcome for Him, because on the chief day of life He had turned the water of marriage joy into wine; another in Capernaum, because there he had changed sorrow into gladness, and given a young girl back to her father from the gates of death. He had stayed in John's modest lodging at Jerusalem, as well as used the "Upper Room" of a wealthier friend. There was a room in a publican's house in Capernaum which was sacred because Jesus had feasted there and sealed as in a sacrament the salvation of Levi;

and Zaccheus, to the last day of his life, saw the Master crossing his threshold that night He slept in Jericho. The family of St. Peter could have told many things of Jesus—a fifth gospel of what He said and did at His ease—but the home of the Gospels dearest to the Christian heart is that of Bethany, where the Master found a refuge from labour and persecution, and constant sympathy with Mary and Martha and their brother Lazarus.

So brief and tantalising are the allusions in the Gospels, and so keen and ingenious is our interest in personal details, that various incidents have been woven together into what may be called the romance of Bethany. This family first met Jesus, it is suggested, when He dined in their house in Capernaum, at the invitation of Simon the Pharisee, who was afterwards to appear as Simon the leper. He was then a hard and formal Pharisee, of clean life and orthodox faith, who had his suspicions of Jesus, and desired to examine Him quietly at his own table. His only son was present, Lazarus, a quiet and thoughtful young man, who, on his father being laid aside by the most hopeless and loathsome of diseases, became head of his family, and, it is suggested, is known as the young ruler. Watching the feast that day and noting what happened were Simon's two daughters, Martha and Mary. One was unsentimental and practical, like himself, with a strong sense of the legal side of religion, and an impatience of its mystical spirit. The other was spiritual and imaginative, in whom a mother now departed was living, and to her rarer soul the Pharisaic side of religion was unsatisfying and repellent. If Jesus' presence and bearing deepened Simon's suspicions and dislike, the Master made converts of his family. Martha repented of the inhospitality of her father's house, and was to repay with usury the lack of service to Jesus that day. Mary was much affected by the lowly devotion of the woman who was a sinner

and will live to anoint Jesus also, but this time it will be His head, and Lazarus assures himself of what he has dimly imagined, that the secret of everlasting life was not within the Ten Commandments.

Poor Simon, so high and mighty, so hard and self-sufficient, so unmerciful to sinners and so bitter against Jesus—a sad thing was to befall him. He might treat Jesus as he pleased, with rudeness or with courtesy; but one visitor asks no man's leave and takes no man's insolence, even though he be Simon the Pharisee. Was it not a judgment on his exclusiveness and hardness that this superstitious Pharisee was stricken with the symbol of sin, the awful scourge of leprosy? He would not allow this woman to touch him, but now not only his Pharisaic friends, but the very outcasts of the streets shunned his presence. He loathed the sight of this miserable in his house; but Simon has to leave his house, his city, his associates, his children and pass into seclusion. Did the unfortunate father of our friends repent of his treatment of Jesus and seek His help and was Simon the leper, healed now of his disease as well as of his pride, present at the second anointing of Jesus in his home of Bethany? We dare to hope that He who saved the children failed not with the father, and that the woman who was a sinner, and the man who was a Pharisee, met in the Kingdom of God.

The son cannot throw off the spiritual fascination of the Master, and becomes one of His unattached disciples, following and hearing Him, till one day he cast himself at Jesus' feet, seeking for an inheritance Simon could not leave him. It is recorded that Jesus loved him, and we remember the word, "Lazarus whom Thou lovest," and also that Jesus said to him, "One thing thou lackest," as to Martha, who also shared a strain of worldliness, "One thing is needful," which are at least striking coincidences. For the time he was not

minded to make the sacrifices Jesus required; it was too much to give up his house in Galilee and that pleasant home at Bethany, with its garden on the slope of Olivet. The word of Jesus was not strong enough; but God has other messengers, more imperative and autocratic, whom no one denies, and to whom all things are possible. When Lazarus sickened and died, of all his possessions he only retained one—the family grave in the garden; and when he rose again, he was willing to hold all his goods in trust for the Kingdom of God.

Whether we can be certain in identifying Simon the Pharisee with Simon the leper, and the young ruler with Lazarus, the Gospels at least give us three scenes in the family life of the two sisters and their brother, in each of which Jesus is the central figure. The first is a picture of quiet life, and shows us that the Master was not always working at the highest pressure, but had His hours of rest. Weary with the discussions of Jerusalem, which he had been visiting at a Feast, Jesus, Who had no love for cities, escaped to Bethany for rest. The company of good women was to Jesus, as to many other delicate and spiritual natures, a relief and refreshment, because He found Himself in an atmosphere of emotion and sympathy. The sisters were of different types, although one in kindness and loyalty, and their separate individualities stand out in relief from the story. Martha was chiefly concerned that their Guest should be served, and her desire was to compass Him with every observance of hospitality. She was full of plans for His comfort and rest, so that for once He should have no care or burden. Her energy and ingenuity, all inspired by love, were unceasing, and showed the traces of that religious spirit which knows no quietness, and expends itself in the works of charity. It was inevitable that Martha should be impatient at times with Mary, to whom this bustle of goodness was altogether foreign. The joy of Mary was to sit at the Master's feet and drink in

every word which fell from His lips, for here was that religion which hides truth within the heart as great treasure. Martha was concerned with what is external, Mary with what is spiritual; and if the Master gently chided Martha, He was not indifferent to her solicitude for Him; and if He praised Mary, it was not for inaction, but for inwardness. It is a grateful thought that Jesus, Who was homeless and a wanderer, Who was often hungry and thirsty, Who was soon to be shamefully used and tortured, had Bethany with its two hostesses. One of them cared for His body, and this is woman's work, so that Martha is the patron saint of all good housewives, and careful mothers and skilful nurses; and the other entered into His thoughts and plans, so that Mary is the chief type of the women who see visions and understand deep things, and show us the example of saintship. Within this haunt of Jesus were found the two people who make the complement of religion —Martha, the type of action; and Mary, of meditation. They stand together in the great affairs of the Church: St. Peter and St. John, St. Francis and St. Dominic, Erasmus and Luther; they are in our homes the eager, strenuous, industrious people on whom the work falls, and the gentle, gracious, thoughtful souls, who are the consolation and quietness of life. Between the two kinds no comparison must be made, upon neither must any judgment be passed; both are the friends of Jesus, and the helpers of the world.

The second visit of Jesus to Bethany is associated with one of those swift and unexpected family calamities which affect the imagination by their poignant contrast, and invest life with a profound seriousness. You come as a guest to some home, and live beneath its kindly roof with great satisfaction, because the family is knit together in love, and their hearts are full of charity; because conversation turns on noble themes and beautiful things; because the common life is raised above vulgar

ambition and personal ends, and is ruled by the Spirit of Jesus. It is with wistful regret you leave such a haven of peace and put out again to sea, where the winds of rivalry and strife, and controversy and malice, have full play, and lash the waters into storm. Within a grateful memory you retain that quiet interior, with its gentle inhabitants moving to and fro, intent on homely duties, or sitting wrapt in meditation, and pray God's blessing on that home of sweet content. It seemeth to you most fortunate that, amid this welter of sorrow and dispeace, one home should be immune from trouble, and should anticipate the eternal calm of our Father's House — when you learn, with a shock of dismay, that Death has also visited this house, and has not gone away as you did, alone. God's dark angel might have well spared this nook of rare felicity, and His intrusion has the aspect of special cruelty. Your heart returns to that home to miss the face which was its sun, to see the shadow on the room which used to lie in soft sunshine, to hear nothing but the sound of weeping. And we understand in our measure what Jesus felt when news came to Him beyond Jordan, where He was secluding Himself from the Jews, that sorrow had befallen the pleasant home of Bethany, and that His friend Lazarus was dead.

The light does not shine so fully on Lazarus in his home as on his sisters; but it is easy to understand his position. The father of the family was either dead or in seclusion; the mother must have been dead, and was a pious memory. In such circumstances a brother takes a father's part to his sisters, and they do their best to mother him. The charge of their common possessions and the care of his sisters would fall on Lazarus, and they could not have had a more honourable or affectionate guardian. If we have not the incidents of his life, we have a singular tribute to his character. It is not conclusive that he was respected by the religious party, who came

from Jerusalem to share the sorrow of his sisters in their bereavement, for this might only mean that he was a Pharisee of good standing. Nor can we, from our knowledge of human nature, accept the devotion of these good women as final evidence of Lazarus' excellence, for he was their only brother, and kind to them. What convinces us that Lazarus—who (unless he be the young ruler) says not one word in all the Gospels, and (unless he be the owner of Gethsemane, who left a linen under-garment in the soldier's hands), does not perform one action in the Gospels—was a man of preëminent and winning goodness, is the friendship of Jesus. Jesus' attachment to this man was so marked and warm that the family took note of it, and spake of it with jealous pride. Jesus loved them all; but it was with emphasis Martha said, "him whom Thou lovest"; and Jesus said to the disciples who had caught the same affection, "Our friend Lazarus." These words of the sister and the Master are the portrait and biography and judgment of Lazarus. What crystal purity of soul, what silent understanding of spiritual mysteries, what rare perfection of character must have been his! What longed-for meetings these two must have had when Lazarus would be watching in the garden for the Master, and Jesus would kiss His friend and say, "Peace be unto thee, Lazarus!" What long conferences, when the hours were too short, and Jesus told to this quiet man all He hoped to do and suffer! what longing, regretful partings when Jesus left the garden to return to Galilee! All the commandments have I kept from my youth up, said the young ruler to Jesus. "Ye are my friends," said Jesus once to His disciples, "if ye do whatsoever I command you"; and now He said, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth."

Within the home of Bethany some rapid and deadly sickness had run its familiar course. There would be the first stage, when Lazarus did not seem to be himself, but knew not what

ailed him — Mary, imagining some secret care for which she reproached herself, Martha insisting on overwork, which she had long prophesied would some day lay him aside. There would come the second stage, when Lazarus, after much protesting, would be obliged to yield before the rising fever and the sisters would give all their strength and love to his service — Mary with delicate, grateful attentions, Martha with many ingenious expedients. During this time Lazarus would speak as if the sickness was a th'- of a day, and the sisters would cheer one another with fanc... of his betterness. With the next stage all hopefi', kindly make-believe would be at an end, and they would know that it was already a fight with death for Lazarus, when physicians and remedies and love itself seemed poor opponents to the dread merciless power. And then the end came, when two broken-hearted, clinging women, praying, watching, weeping, saw their brother slip from their hands and fall asleep. It was the tragedy which is acted sooner or later in every human home, but which never grows commonplace, which ever retains its austere and awful grandeur.

It is in these black straits of life that we realise our friends — the people whom we trust with all our soul, to whom e turn with hope for assistance — and in their extremit sisters thought of Jesus. They did not ask Him to come, ey sent no moving description of Lazarus' weakness; it wa enough to let Jesus know that His friend was s k, and He would do what was best. There was that perfect understanding and sympathy of friendship which does not dream of appeals nor doubt of succour. On one si the Master used the liberty of friendship, and, instead of has g to Bethany, He tarried till He knew, from the very nature of the illness, that His friend was sleeping in the bosom of God. Jesus had His reason for delay, that He might teach His disciples of all ages a lesson of faith and that He might give Death himself a lesson in

humility. Twice Jesus had tried conclusions with this unruly vassal—when he claimed a little maid for her father, and called back a son for his mother, who was a widow. Those rebuffs had rankled in the mind of Death, and he must have his revenge. He had dared greatly in this third encounter, and had attempted to rob Jesus himself. He must be taught his place. Let the enemy win his victory and make it secure; let him glory for four days, and boast that none could now spoil him of his prisoner. It will be the more crushing humiliation for Death, the more splendid trophy for Jesus, en Lazarus hears the voice of the Son of God and hurries forth to meet his Friend.

When Jesus came at last to the help of His friends, it was characteristic of Martha that on the first rumour of Him she should rush to meet Him; and on His comforting her with the assurance that Lazarus would yet live, should declare her faith in terms of the Pharisaic doctrine of the Resurrection. It was also characteristic of Mary, who did not love public scenes, that she should remain in the house. As soon as Jesus began to unfold His idea of everlasting life, which was something Death could not touch, Martha, without any further word, sent for Mary. When Jesus handled deep things, it was the same as calling for Mary. As He came to the place where we lay so often our love, our life, our hope, Jesus was stirred in the depths of His soul. He had sympathised with others, fathers and mothers in their losses, now death had rifled His own heart; and as He thought of Lazarus lying unconscious, cold, corrupting, the tragedy of human life overcame Jesus, and He, who rather concealed than paraded emotion, and had Himself rebuked the wailing over Jairus' daughter, wept aloud in that garden after such a lamentable fashion that the Pharisees, friends of the family who were present, said: "Behold, how He loved him!"

"Lazarus," said Jesus in full, as He stood before the barred

prison of death, "this is the first time I have visited Bethany, and that thou hast not come to meet Me. It is not Bethany without thee; I wait and weary for My friend; I have not many friends, and I cannot spare thee, Lazarus. Thou hast gone on a long journey, and hast seen strange sights; but thou hast not gone so far but My voice will reach thee, and there will be no sight so welcome as thy face. His is a strong hand which holds thee, and no man dare disobey his word; but the key of Death's stronghold is at my girdle, and I am his Lord. Before I go to my agony and the cross I must see thee, Lazarus. It is thy Friend who calls—Lazarus, come forth!" And Death had no power to prevent the meeting of Jesus and His friend.

Once more we see Jesus with His friends, and now the circumstances are less harrowing, and still more beautiful. As Jesus has arrived for the Passover—His last feast before all things should be fulfilled—He goes to stay with them during Passion Week, so that, whatever may be the controversy and dispeace of the day in Jerusalem, He might cross the Mount of Olives, and rest in Bethany. To celebrate His coming, and as a sacrifice of thanksgiving for a great deliverance, the family give a feast, and each member thereof fills a natural place. Lazarus, the modest head of the household, and now surrounded with a mysterious awe, sits with Jesus at the table; Martha, as was her wont, was superintending the feast with an access of zeal; and Mary was inspired of the Spirit of Grace, and did a thing so lovely and so spiritual that it will be told unto all time, and will remain the picture of ideal devotion. With a wealthy family it was customary to have in store a treasure of fragrant ointment for the honouring of the dead; but there came into Mary's mind a more pious use for it. Why pay the homage for a dead body, and render it when the person can receive no satisfaction? Far better that in their lifetime our friends should know that they are loved, and should

be braced for suffering by the devotion of loyal hearts. Before His enemies have crowned Him with thorns, Mary will pour the spikenard on His head, and before they have pierced His feet with nails she will anoint them with her love, so that the fragrance of the precious ointment would be still on His hair when He hung upon the cross.

The odour of the ointment filled the room, and four people passed judgment. One understood and condemned—Judas, who was arranging the betrayal of Jesus, and had lost an increase for his bag. One did not understand, but condemned—a Pharisee of Jerusalem, who did not know that the plot was so ripe, but hated to see Jesus honoured. One did not understand, but approved, and that was an apostle—say, St. Peter—who could not believe that Jesus would be crucified, but who rejoiced that He should receive any honour. One understood and approved, and that was the Master, Who, with the shadow of the cross falling on His soul, was comforted by a woman's insight and a woman's love. Her own heart taught her the secret of sacrifice; her heart anticipated the longing for sympathy; and so beautiful in its grace and spiritual delicacy was her act that Jesus declared it would be told to her praise wherever the Gospels were read.

The family of Bethany will ever have a place in the heart of Jesus' disciples because they made a home for Jesus in the days of His ministry, and because they compassed Him with tender offices of friendship during the strain of Passion Week. Very soon He would be done with earthly homes and the land in which He had lived as a wayfaring man, but for ever this Friend of man, hungering for love and fellowship, passes down the paths of life, and knocks at the door of the heart. Blessed they who hear His voice and give Him welcome, who are not ashamed of Him or of His cause, who serve Him with their best, and pour upon His head the riches of their love!

Chapter XXV: The Conspiracy Against Goodness

NO one with a healthy mind can read the Gospels without being torn between admiration for the grace of Jesus and indignation at the persecution of His enemies; but let him make at every turn a careful distinction between the people and the rulers. The people, who counted John Baptist a prophet, and would not allow a word to be said against him, gave an immediate welcome to Jesus; they heard Him gladly in temple and synagogue, on hillside or lake shore; they called Him by their names of honour, and thanked God that He had visited His people; they gave Him a triumphal entry to Jerusalem with palms and hosannas, and they were so loyal that the rulers dared not make a public arrest of Jesus. No doubt the fanatical mob of the capital was too subservient to the rulers, and a spasm of jealousy might for an hour affect a place like Nazareth; but it remains a fact pregnant with instruction and encouragement that when the Perfect Goodness once appeared on earth the common people recognised His likeness and did Him homage; and since that day, as often as a man of honest heart and pure life and unselfish ideals has appealed to the people, they have responded with generous enthusiasm.

It was the ruling class in the Jewish Church and state, the men who held high rank, or were the scholars of the day, or had huge possessions, priests, rabbis, millionaires, who were the enemies of the Master. They looked askance at Jesus and suspected His ends, and kept a watch on Him, and cross-questioned Him and plotted against Him, and suborned false witnesses for His trial, and bought the soul of a traitor, and schemed and toiled and lied, and at last succeeded in nailing Him to the cross. Among this class we know there were some good and honest men, and there may have been many more than we know: some of Jesus' relentless foes may also have had reasons for their conduct which satisfied their consciences, and many did what we in their circumstances would have considered ourselves justified in doing. However that may be, it remains another startling and suggestive fact that when the Perfect Goodness made His appeal to the chief men of the Jewish people, they answered with contempt, hatred, and death, and that from that day till now some of the noblest of the Master's messengers have been sent to prison and death by priests and kings.

When Jesus made His first appearance in Jerusalem and cleansed the Temple, He distinctly alarmed the rulers, and He then placed in their hands the evidence which was to be used for His condemnation. No overt action was taken against Jesus then, and no plan was made; but ecclesiastical corporations are very jealous and sensitive, gifted with an unfailing scent of danger, and a keen instinct of self-preservation. If the priests allowed matters to rest, so long as Jesus confined Himself to Galilee and did not touch the Temple income, the Pharisees considered it desirable to follow with vigilance the proceedings of this new Prophet. As a spider spins his web in hope that he may catch his prey, so did the party of the Pharisees take counsel together in the capital, and thence, by many an agent and many a question, they laid the toils for Jesus in

Galilee. When Jesus brushed aside their flimsy cobwebs, the Pharisees began to show their hand openly in Jerusalem; and at last, when Jesus could not be browbeaten, but rather was making bolder claims, they fell back on the last weapon of their kind; they closed His mouth on the cross. So the conspiracy against Jesus had three stages, and the first was controversy, and with honest discussion the Master had no quarrel. There are seasons when the chief affairs of life are cast into debate, and when to withdraw oneself were to deny truth. This conflict not only separates truth from error, so that truth being assailed is the more radiantly vindicated, and error masquerading as truth has the mask openly torn away, but the arena of argument also tries the character of the combatants. By this severe test the Evangel of Jesus was thrown into bolder relief and its excellence more perfectly revealed; our Master was splendidly justified, and the Pharisees hopelessly condemned. We are not accustomed to think of Jesus as a controversialist; we had rather hold Him in our imagination as a Prophet, a Saviour, a Friend; but Jesus had the courage of His faith; and if He was silent beneath the scourging of His body, He knew how to scourge them who assailed the gospel. Opposed to the most determined, unscrupulous, unreasonable and ingenious of antagonists, the Master was never taken aback or put to confusion, never missed the intellectual weakness of His adversary, or failed to champion His own cause, never appealed to prejudice or confused a special pleader with an honest enquirer. One can conceive nothing more admirable than His delicate humour, His quickness of repartee, His courtesy of speech, and His moral elevation. While His life was a series of personal insults, privations, humiliations, it was also a series of intellectual and moral victories, so that His opponents were defeated every time in open debate, and only succeeded when they betook themselves to brute force.

Upon their side the tactics of the Pharisees were very humiliating. They condescended to dog the steps of Jesus with spies, so that He could hardly go to a house without seeing a detective at the table, or open His mouth in a synagogue but in front of Him some agent made up his report. His slightest word was twisted to another meaning, and His most innocent action perverted to an evil appearance. This ordeal of spies was not the least of Jesus' trials, and under such vexatious espionage any ordinary man, however unself-conscious and sweet-tempered, would have grown nervous and have lost self-control, —would have become hard and self-defiant. We are filled with disgust as we realise that the Master was watched as He entered a house, as He sat at meat, as He went through the fields, till He recognised the faces of the detectives, caught their expression, noted the signs they exchanged, and knew what they were thinking. The air in which Jesus worked even in Galilee was thick with acrid criticism and low suspicion, and from time to time there was an explosion, in which it was the Pharisees and not Jesus who suffered.

Social ritualism, which was a fetish with the Pharisees, and which Jesus regarded with contempt, afforded the occasion of one sharp, poignant collision. Jewish religion had enjoined, among other burdensome customs, an amazing rite of handwashing, not for cleanliness but for ceremony. There were regulations regarding the kind of water to be used, the vessels from which it had to be poured, the persons who were to pour the water, and the extent to which the pouring was to go. It was solemn fooling; but just on that account the Pharisees attached more importance to this childish ritual than to the essence of religion; and when Jesus' disciples brushed aside such trivialities, the Pharisees gave Him the alternative of condemning His disciples or denying the tradition of the elders. Jesus was very indignant at their moral effrontery, and, after His habit, He

asked them a question. They wished to know why His disciples ate with unwashen hands. Would they tell Him why they, the Pharisees, broke the commandments of Moses, which was a much more serious matter? Did not Moses straitly command them to honour their father and mother? and now, if their parents asked for assistance, they replied that the money, or whatever it was, had been devoted to a religious use. It was Corban, and could not be given. Here, if you please, was hypocrisy — to leave your mother to starve, and then complain about unwashen hands. Who was justified — a man with a clean heart and unwashen hands, or a man with hands washed according to forty rules and with a hard, loveless, impure heart? From the veriest absurdity of ritual the Master lifted the discussion to the highest level, and asserted the supremacy of the soul from which life flowed as from a fountain.

Another subject on which the religious party of Jesus' day were half crazy was the keeping of Sabbath, on which they had laid down so many regulations that the day had become a yoke instead of a rest. As Jesus walked one Sabbath along a path beside the ripe corn, with spies on his track, the disciples, being hungry, plucked and ate some grains. As this was double labour — rubbing off the husk as well as plucking — the Pharisees — men ever of the most scrupulous conscience — were gravely concerned, and challenged Jesus. He met them first on their own ground, showing that David ate the shewbread although it belonged to the priests, because life is more than law, even according to rabbis; and, then, having put Himself under the law of necessity, Jesus took wider ground. Whether was Sabbath intended to be a bondage to man, so that he would be afraid to move, or to be a help, so that he might rest and worship? Jesus' teaching on the Sabbath confirmed the darkest suspicions of his foes, and was not forgotten. Face to face with His critics on this most dangerous ground, Jesus asserted the free-

dom of His disciples from every tradition of man. For His heresy on the Sabbath even more than for His association with sinners and His Messianic claims, Jesus was hunted to death.

One other encounter in Galilee illustrates the venom of the Pharisees and the graciousness of Jesus. The poor Pharisees, whom one must pity a little, were so irritated and daunted by Jesus' miracles that they were at their wit's end for a plausible explanation. If they asked Him for a sign, He would not give it, and would call them an adulterous generation. If people made much of His miracles, the Master would belittle them as a ground of faith; but yet there they were—a very awkward fact indeed for the other side. It was to be expected that the foolish, gaping people, ever carried away by some sensation, and forgetful of their reliable instructors, would be won over to this false Prophet by His wonders. What was to be done? And in keeping with the spirit of the day the Pharisees insinuated that Jesus cast out devils by the power of Beelzebub. Jesus, they meant to say, was in league with Satan, and for base ends had his assistance. It was one of those malicious, clever suggestions which serve with ignorant people, and by repetition are apt to colour the mind. What if this Teacher, so pleasant of speech and so mighty in deeds, should after all be an emissary of the Evil One in disguise? Once the suspicion was lodged in the mind it would do its own work, as a subtle, virulent poison in the blood, and every act and word of Jesus would be discounted. After His usual candid fashion, which was most embarassing to crooked adversaries, the Master faced the slander boldly and brought it to the test of reason, with the people as judges. It was said that He was in league with the Prince of Devils, and drove out devils by authority of their prince. Then Beelzebub had turned against his own subjects and his own cause, and the kingdom of evil was divided in two. Dared they hope for so fortunate an issue—devils casting out devils, dis-

WHEN IT IS EVENING

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ease healing disease, madness curing madness? Was there ever such unreason! Besides, did not the Pharisees claim to have power of exorcising evil spirits? and from whom had they received their authority? Was it not more reasonable to conclude that if any one beat down evil in any form he must be the servant of God and have his reinforcement from on high? And if that be true, then it was surely blasphemy in the highest degree to assert that the Divine energy, working through any one, Jesus or another, for the highest ends, was an emanation of the Evil One; and for this blasphemy, because it hardened the heart and blinded the eyes, there could be no forgiveness. It was the final and hopeless contempt of the Divine Goodness.

It was soon evident to every person that the breach between the Pharisees and Jesus was past healing, and that a crisis was at hand. Their worst suspicions of Him had been confirmed by His teaching in Galilee, and He had not taken any pains to conciliate them. He had worsted the agents of the ruling party in a series of encounters, and they were not the men to forgive or forget. So long as Jesus kept in Galilee He was safe, since He had turned the heads of the illiterate provincials; so soon as He came to the capital the tables would be turned. This revolutionary Prophet and despiser of authority would then be in the grip of the council, whose servants could arrest Him, and who, with the fanatical mob of Jerusalem at its command, could do as they pleased with Him. Many were therefore very curious whether Jesus would attend the Feast of Tabernacles in the autumn before His death, and what would happen if He did. Upon their part, His enemies had resolved to shift the battleground from the country, where Jesus was beyond their reach, to the city where they would have Him at their mercy. Upon His part He might refuse to give them this advantage and intrench Himself in Galilee, leaving the

council to arrest Him among His friends. In that case the Pharisees would point out that He could be no Prophet of God who declined to meet them in the Holy City and skulked in out-of-the-way places. If He went up to the capital, He would almost certainly be arrested and His work be ended; if He did not, He would be accused of cowardice and His influence be undermined. The Pharisees awaited the issue with some confidence, tempered only by fear of the incalculable personality of Jesus.

It was natural that in this excitement over His movements a good deal of advice should be given to the Master. His own family, by which we understand His elder brethren, who were at this time very candid friends indeed, and did not believe in Him, insisted that He should go, and stated their ground with frankness. If He really was what He claimed, He must come forth openly; no one could be accepted as a prophet who shirked the ordeal of Jerusalem. We may very well imagine that His disciples would add their wisdom, as they had done on other occasions, and that they would urge Him to avoid the capital. Peter would vie with Thomas in entreaties of safety and prophecies of danger. Jesus heard His friends, and followed a plan whose wisdom is apparent to the after-look. He did not go up to the capital with the multitude, because this would have meant an outburst of enthusiasm and a serious collision. He had no doubt about the end, but it must not come at this Feast: He had still a part of His gospel to give and it was more fitting that He should make His great exodus at Passover. Nor did He absent Himself and lose the opportunity of meeting His enemies in their fastness. When the last of the pilgrims had passed, Jesus could go up to the capital unnoticed; and when the Pharisees, half desiring, half fearing, were enquiring, "Where is He?" and the people were arguing about Him in groups, the Master appeared quietly in the Temple and, as was the way with rabbis, began to teach.

Nowhere in history could there be found a parallel to the scene of the next few days in the Temple courts, for nowhere has there ever been a people so intense in religion, and nowhere a Prophet so august. As one reads the Fourth Gospel, whose graphic touches prove an eye-witness, he can almost see the mass of people, seething with excitement, listening to Jesus for a brief space, then breaking into questions, denials, insults, forming groups and dissolving again, rushing hither and thither, speaking, gesticulating, shouting. Jesus in turn vindicates His mission from God, defends Himself against the charge of Sabbath-breaking, challenges His enemies to prove Him a sinner, explains His relation to Moses, asserts His priority to Abraham, opens the eyes of one born blind. He is told that He has a devil and is a Samaritan; He is asked whether He purposes to commit suicide; it is suggested that He will go to the Gentiles; it is pointed out that He must be an impostor; once the officers of the Sanhedrim wished to arrest Him; once the people would have laid hands on Him; once they would have stoned Him. Some said He was a good man, others that He deceived the people; some were inclined to believe that Jesus was the Messiah, others that He could not be, because He came from Galilee. His name passes from lip to lip, and He is the centre of all discussion.

Among this multitude there are three parties, and amid this Babel one can detect various tendencies. There is the party of rulers, consisting of the priests and Pharisees and social magnates, who are generally called the Jews. With very few exceptions, their minds were made up, and they were determined to give no quarter to Jesus. They kept their hand on the pulse of the people, and as soon as they felt the slightest enthusiasm to the Master they took steps to arrest it. The second party was the citizens of Jerusalem, who were very keen and bigoted, but who were not beyond persuasion, who were puzzled as to the

claims of Jesus and shaken about His reported heresy, saying, "Do the rulers know, indeed, that He is the very Christ?" And the last party was the people collected from all quarters of the Holy Land and from the outlands of the Gentiles, who, although they lost their heads once or twice, were, on the whole, favourable to Jesus and, in some cases, believed on Jesus upon reasonable grounds, saying, "When Christ cometh, will He do more miracles than those which this Man hath done?"

While the debate goes on with constant changes of popular feeling and accumulated victories of Jesus, the council hold meetings within the Temple precincts to consider how they can best deal with Jesus now that He is within their reach, and reap in safety the harvest of their opportunity. One gathers that they were perfectly willing to go to the last extremity, but that they considered it dangerous at the present moment. By-and-by, when things were ripe, they would rid themselves of this troubler for ever; but in the meantime they would see what threatening would do. He had been very bold in Galilee when it was a question of their detectives. What would He do face to face with the council in all the massed authority of priest, rabbi, and elder? They send their officers to arrest the Master, and they wait for His appearance at their bar with nervous impatience. Their servants return alone and apologetic. Against the spiritual majesty of Jesus' words what availed earthly weapons? The Master hath His witnesses in all quarters, and the officers declared what their rulers had felt in their hearts, "Never man spake like this Man." It was very humiliating for the angry Sanhedrists; and as is the way with mean-spirited men, since they had failed to browbeat Jesus, they began to scold their servants, contemptuously enquiring whether they also had been deceived, and bidding them remember that none of their masters had believed in this Gali-

lean. As for the multitude, if the officers were thinking of them, let them understand that the people were of no account. And in the bitterness of this first check the insolence of the narrowest men on earth, priests and pedants, allowed itself full vent. "This people," they said, "which know not the law is accursed."

They spoke too hastily in their heart, these baffled councillors, for they were not all of one mind. No sooner had the servants been rebuked and had retired than a witness for the Master appeared among the rulers themselves. We may fairly assume that Nicodemus had watched with disgust the policy of detection and the plan of coercion, but in face of the hopeless majority he had made no sign. The censure of the servants had been a challenge to his honesty; and although Nicodemus was not by nature or habit a bold man, he was a self-respecting and honourable councillor. The council had forgotten themselves and were acting in a way unworthy of any legal court. They were treating Jesus as if He were a criminal, but as yet He had never been tried. He had not even been charged. The Jewish law was exact and merciful; but the council had ceased to be judges, and had fallen to the level of a rabble of partisans. With much disgust, Nicodemus rebuked them for their fanaticism and illegality. "Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?" This grave, unanswerable censure broke the patience of the council, which advised Nicodemus, a master in Israel, with insulting emphasis, to study the Scriptures, and then, exhausted with its own emotion, broke up in confusion.

As if this mortification was not enough, the council, or a section of it, must needs bring upon themselves, on a following day, a still worse humiliation. Jesus, full of pity towards human suffering, and indifferent, as usual, to human tradition, not only opened the eyes of one born blind, which was embarrassing, but did it on the Sabbath, which was exasperating. Certain

officious neighbours brought the man before the Pharisees, who were sitting as a committee of council, and the Pharisees plunged into the case greedily, only to experience a series of disasters. They began with a division among themselves, which shows that Nicodemus was not alone; some considering that a man must be bad who broke the Sabbath, and some concluding that a man could not be bad who did such miracles. They got no satisfaction from the parents of the patient, who confined themselves to giving very decided evidence that their son was born blind; and as regards how he came to see, they suggested in a surly tone that they had better ask himself. And then the man proved the most unmanageable witness of all, for he turned upon the council, and asked them whether their curiosity about the miracle meant that they were going to become Jesus' disciples, which was very provoking; and he also argued that Jesus could not be a sinner, since He did such works. Things came to such a pass that the irritated council, put to confusion now by a beggar, lost self-control for the second time. They told the unfortunate man that he had been born in sin, and promptly excommunicated him. This incident closed the affair of the Feast of Tabernacles, which had been a victory for Jesus at every point. It had been intended to arrest Him, and the council's own servants would not touch Him. He had met every criticism, and silenced the Pharisees in their own field. He had largely won over the people, and had actually sown discord in the council itself. He had come up in danger; He went down in safety; and we may conclude that the council were glad to know that the Master had left the capital.

It is not, however, to be supposed that this magnificent vindication of Jesus' position had conciliated the rulers or shaken their determination. On the contrary, they now realised that this was no provincial teacher whom they could daunt with

their learning and reduce to silence by threats. Up to the present He had never once yielded, and they had never once succeeded. They had attacked Him in the provinces, and every village in Galilee was ringing with their defeats. They had challenged Him to come to Jerusalem, and the authority of the council had been openly shaken There was not room in the land for the Pharisees and Jesus; one or other must gain the final mastery within the next six months, and the Pharisees did not propose to abdicate. One course had been before their minds for some time, as Jesus had learned, and they were now resolved to pursue it to the end without faltering. They had made one mistake by rashness; they would be more cautious in their next move; by one plan or another they would accomplish the death of Jesus. The date may have been unfixed, but their resolution passed into execution when Jesus came to Bethany and raised Lazarus from the dead. It no doubt seemed to the Pharisees that the war was to be carried into their own country. If Jesus was to perform the greatest of His wonders at the gates of Jerusalem, and, reinforced by such popular evidence, appeal to the people in the capital, He would be irresistible. What they had to do must be done quickly, and the Pharisees completed their plan. "From that day forth they took counsel together for to put Him to death."

When any person in authority is obliged to pass sentence of death on a fellow man, because that man has committed some ghastly crime, even the most hardened judge will have a sense of serious responsibility. His anxiety will be deepened if the offence be political and death is to be inflicted as the last protection of organised society against anarchy. But the extreme exercise of judicial power is taking away a man's life, not because he has injured his neighbour or shattered society, but because he has made a mistake in his theological thinking. No other human act is so daring as the slaying of a heretic, and

nothing was ever done on earth so awful as the crucifixion of Jesus. Yet if the opponents of Jesus had been honestly convinced in their minds that He deserved death, and had tried Him after a straightforward fashion, as men obeying their conscience with sadness, we should have had a colossal act of religious folly, but the name of Pharisee had not been execrated unto all generations.

The most ghastly feature in the crime of Calvary was its absolute dishonesty from beginning to end; and although the guilt must be divided, yet the weight rests on the religious party. As regards the Romans they had never heard of Jesus —a preacher of the Jews, who was careful to keep Himself clear of politics—had He not been forced on their procurator and created an embarrassment which Pilate could not shake off. The poor, simple people, if left to themselves, had honoured and obeyed Jesus, and they saw no evil in Him till their minds were poisoned. And the very priests, although certainly there was never any love lost between them and a prophet, had not enough interest in religion to interfere with Jesus, if some one had not appealed to their self-interest and worked on their jealous fears, till they were goaded into frenzy and forced into the front of the proceedings against Jesus. It was the Pharisees who had been first the critics, then the slanderers, and in the end became the persecutors of Jesus, and to attain their purpose they used every other party in the most cunning and unscrupulous fashion. They were such masters in the lower art of politics that they made their hereditary opponents do their disreputable work in the end, and on the last day of the tragedy the Pharisees stood in the shadow, while the worldly and dignified priests worked themselves into a frenzy and screamed for the death of Jesus. The murder of Jesus was an intrigue of the Pharisees, and the most shameless and adroit conspiracy in the annals of religion.

Between the members of the high priestly families, who were Sadducees, and the religious party, who were the Pharisees, there raged a bitter feud, which was never laid to rest, and whose healing was hopeless. The Sadducees paid no attention to the oral tradition, and the Pharisees were inclined to magnify it above the written law. The Sadducees did not believe in the future life, and the Pharisees had an elaborate doctrine of heaven and hell. The Sadducees were quite contented with the foreign yoke, while the Pharisees hated the very sight of the Roman eagles. The Pharisees loathed and despised the Sadducees as heretics, unbelievers, unpatriotic, worldly—a parasite growth on the national life, sucking both its substance and its spirit. So keen was the feeling within the Sanhedrim between the two parties—the Right and the Left of the Jewish commonwealth—that a spark might cause a conflagration. On one occasion St. Paul, who was well acquainted with the jealousies and animosities of the two wings, appealed to the Pharisees for their support, declaring that he was called in question concerning the resurrection of the dead; and disciple of Jesus though he was, and dissenter from his former friends, the Pharisees, at the sound of this battle cry, rallied to his side. It might almost be assumed that what the one party proposed the other would oppose, and one can hardly imagine the circumstances in which the Pharisees and the Sadducees would be united. It certainly would not be the faith of the Church nor the safety of the State. As a matter of fact they only acted together once in an affair of the first importance, and it remains the lasting disgrace of the Pharisees that they forgot for a moment their quarrel with the priests, in which the Pharisees were at their best, and patched up some kind of alliance which was based on dishonour, that with the aid of infidels and loose livers they might crucify Jesus Christ.

While the Pharisees girded at the Master in Galilee they did

not need the aid of the council; and when they did their best to frighten Jesus in Jerusalem, it is likely that they received only an informal sanction, although at this stage priests begin to appear among His enemies; but as soon as they set themselves seriously to secure His death, the Pharisees required the support of the whole council, and they could not move without the Sadducees. Jesus could not be condemned by the section of the Pharisees; or if He could, they would not be able to carry the sentence into effect. If for no other reason, they must take the priests with them, that the Sadducees might use their influence with the civil power, since with the Romans the Pharisees had no dealings. It was not an easy task to enlist the services of the Sadducees, and light their hatred against Jesus. No Sadducee cared one shekel whether or not Jesus held the traditions of the elders, or kept the Sabbath, or washed His hands before meat, or wrought miracles by His own power or that of Beelzebub. Unto the Sadducees He was only another of those ignorant fanatics who went about discussing subjects no man of the world considered to be worth a moment's consideration; He and the Pharisees might wrangle together to their hearts' content. One point only had the priestly party of that day at heart—that there should be no foolish disturbance which would afford an excuse for the interference of the Roman government, and, of course, which came very much to the same thing, that they should be secured in the enjoyment of the Temple dues. When we find at the first formal meeting of the Sanhedrim in the case of Jesus that what has excited that unscrupulous opportunist, Caiaphas, is the fear lest Jesus should excite an insurrection, and when the charge brought before the Sanhedrim at the trial was a threat to meddle with the Temple, one sees the crafty hand of the Pharisees. What had become of the accusations of heresy which had been so largely used to bias the people, and which from the Pharisees had a

colour of sincerity? They are entirely dropped, and instead charges are made with which the Pharisees could have little or no sympathy. We have a second illustration of the unprincipled trickery of a religious party when the Pharisees kept silence on the doctrine of Jesus, which He did hold and they did disapprove, and assigned to Him revolutionary ideas which He did not hold, and which they would have approved.

The Pharisees must also be held responsible for an incident of singular baseness in the prosecution of Jesus, in which the priests may have been the actors but the Pharisees must have been the contrivers, and that was the use of Judas Iscariot. None knew the popular feeling better than the Pharisees, and none would more earnestly dissuade the priests from a collision with Jesus. He must be taken quickly, not in the Temple or any public place, else there would be a riot, in which the priests would, perhaps, suffer most, but in which the popular power of the Pharisees might also be shaken. Let Him be once arrested, and the people find Him a prisoner, and they would accept the situation. It was the occasion for a swift, secret stroke, and if that were well managed, the crisis would be over. What would exactly fit the situation was a friend of Jesus, who was willing to play the knave, to tell them the Master's private habits, to show them His favourite haunt, to guide them to the place at the most favourable time. It could not be an accident that Judas offered himself at the exact moment when he was needed, and it could not have been the priests who discovered this convenient agent. Every apostle must have been well known to the Pharisees, and this man especially, as a Judean. Had their detectives tried them all and found this was the only one open to seduction? Upon what did they play before he grew into a traitor? Was it simply greed of gain? or was it his fears regarding the collapse of Jesus' kingdom; or was it his sore heart whom Jesus had

warned? or was it his isolation as a Judean among Galileans? or was he really a traitor to the Jews, not to Jesus — desiring to precipitate a crises from which the Master would come out victorious? At any rate he was the paid informer of the council, receiving thirty pieces of silver as blood money, and for this corruption of a soul the blame must chiefly fall on the secret conspirators, in whose hands Judas and Caiaphas were both tools and puppets.

If it be criminal to tempt a man to falsehood, what shall be said of misleading a nation to their ruin? During the whole conspiracy against Jesus there was a lively dread of the people, who saw nothing wrong in the Master, and were much impressed by His mighty works. Should the multitude, gathered at Passover time in the capital, be seized with the idea that Jesus had come from God and was persecuted for righteousness' sake like the prophets of old, they might be unmanageable and take an awkward part in affairs. Jesus would be safe from death, but other people might be in danger of stoning. If the undiscerning, changeable mob could be set against Jesus, He was certainly doomed, and only one hand could administer the poison. The people detested the Sadducees; and had the priests alone persecuted Jesus, it had crowned Him in popular esteem: the people heard and trusted the Pharisees, because the Pharisees had been loyal to the nation's faith and cause. There is something pathetic in the confidence of a people; it is like the trust of a child; to possess it is a profound responsibility, to betray it is an infamy. And the Pharisees betrayed it in a supreme moral crisis. Had they guided the people with knowledge, Jesus would have been accepted as the Messiah; had they left the people alone, Jesus had not been crucified. They asserted that Jesus was a deceiver, and the people accepted their word; they prophesied that He would destroy their nation, and the people were furious; they over-

whelmed the enthusiasm of the Galileans; they played on the passions of the capital; they taught the people to echo the cry of the priests, "Crucify Him! crucify Him!" they fed the fierce fanaticism which Jesus was laying to rest, and induced them to put their Saviour to death, and for this madness, by the action of the moral law, the blood of Jesus has been on Jewish heads, in the siege of Jerusalem and the persecutions of ages. The party of religion shut their eyes to the heavenly light and rejected the Divine goodness; they made their conspiracy and they succeeded; and their children have reaped the fruits of that lamentable victory unto this day.

Chapter XXVI: A Last Encounter

URING the week before Calvary our Master spent, for the most part, His nights at Bethany and His days in the Temple. The conspiracy for His judicial murder, to which the Pharisees had devoted so much pains, and for which they had made such an immense sacrifice of honour, was now complete. Any day and any hour He might be arrested, and His mouth closed; and during the few days that He was at liberty He packed into the time some of His most important teachings, giving the parables of Judgment—the parables of the Two Sons and the Ten Virgins, the parables of the Rejected Corner-stone and the Wicked Husbandmen, and the parable of the Great Assize. During this time, also, He gave final comfort and instruction to His disciples in the discourses of the "Upper Room."

It was fitting that before His mouth was closed He should have a final meeting with His adversaries, and it was a very appropriate circumstance that this meeting should be held in the Temple, and in the face of all the people. One by one the representatives of the classes which were against Jesus approached Him, and one by one they tried Him in final conflict. No display of sweet reasonableness on His part could, of

course, avert the issue — the cross was inevitable — but during the two days in which He was engaged in this conflict He achieved a triumph which the cross could never take from Him. It is the meanest of all victories, when you have been defeated in fair argument, to strike a man full upon the mouth. Jesus obtained the crown — the crown of gold, and the thorns were left upon the head of the Pharisees. Behind the deputations who approached Jesus you can always see the faces of the Pharisees, and with one exception there is not an attack made upon Jesus which they did not inspire.

The first deputation came from the council, representing the whole body — elders, scribes, and priests; but when you look at the questions which they put to Jesus, you can feel that the priests and the elders had comparatively little share in it. The first question was the question of the Pharisees. Their line all through was one of simple-minded inquiry, and also of ostentatious deference. The Master had now come to Jerusalem, and they were glad to welcome Him. The people were gathered together, and were in a very receptive condition. Many questions had been agitating the public mind, and there might have been some difference of opinion; now there was an opportunity for His removing every doubt they had ever had, and also of meeting all their difficulties. As candid men anxious to do what was right by Him, and as members of the council, anxious to do their best by the people committed to their charge, they would now afford Him full scope. The Pharisees' question runs at large after this fashion: "As you are aware," they said, addressing Jesus, "the Almighty has been pleased to send great prophets to our people, and they have declared the knowledge of His work; but of course there are false prophets, as there are true prophets, and it is necessary to make a careful distinction. The council of the nation — the men of the greatest learning and position — is charged

with the responsibility of the people's spiritual well-being; and it has been our custom to decide whether a man was a true prophet or not. We have been unable up to this date to give you our commission, and there have been collisions between us. This has been a matter of regret to us, as no doubt it has been to you; but we notice that you are preaching; and as we gave you no authority and we are sure that you would not preach without some sanction, let this matter be finally settled. In face of the people tell us from whom didst Thou receive Thine authority.

Of course the suggestion was that Christ had no authority—that He was a man eaten up with personal vanity and infected with false doctrine, who was running on His own responsibility, and playing mischief in the community. It was a very skilful question, because behind the Pharisees were a people who did respect the council, and who did honour the prophets sanctioned by the council, and any kind of answer He gave to the question was likely to bring Him into trouble. They had been defeated often by Jesus, and I should suppose they had some misgivings, but on this occasion they felt pretty sure of success.

Now there was no need for Jesus to explain to the representatives of the council the authority He had for His mission, any more than a prophet like Amos required to explain to the priest of Bethel what right he had to come from Tekoa and thunder against the unrighteousness of the people. The right of Jesus lay in the reasonable words He spake, and in the spiritual work which He had done—the only real commission which any prophet can have, and which he can show to people of all creeds and all classes. He had come from God, He might have said; and the proof was that He spake as never man spake regarding the great mysteries of life and of God. They denied His orders, because His orders had not come from

the Jewish council — had not come, that is to say, from the infamous high priest and from the hypocritical Pharisees. He could stand and say, "These words are the vindication of My message, and what I have done is the seal of My orders." But He knew the Pharisees well; and now, since the time had gone past for mercy between Him and them, He might as well administer to them a wholesome humiliation. They had asked Him a question, with assurance and arrogance, in face of the people. He would ask them another; and when His question was answered, He would answer theirs. It was quite within the sphere of their work, and closely connected, with their own inquiry, — a fair, open, and straightforward question. "You Pharisees are judges? I shall admit for the moment your claim that no prophet ought to preach except with your approval; and now I cóme to My question. I am not the only prophet that has addressed this generation. Before Me went one who was greater than all the prophets of the past: he attracted your attention, and you heard him. Will you tell Me, and will you tell these people now and here — the people whom you have gathered together to hear My answer — whether John's baptism and John himself were of God or no?"

Most simple of questions, but it showed that when Jesus considered it becoming to use methods of argument in keeping with the Pharisees' mind, they had as little chance with Him on the lower as on the higher levels of His teaching. An easy answer! — which answer? If they stood forward, and said, John was of God, then Jesus had replied in a moment, "And you did not obey Him. What of your council, what of your authority, what of your moral charge of the people?" They might have said, and they were simply itching to say, that the Baptist was not of God — that he was an insolent and self-sent man. They looked round the faces of the people, and they seemed to see the people's hands stooping for the stones, and

THE TRANSFIGURATION

And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart.

And was transfigured before them: and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light.

And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with Him.—Matthew XVII, 1-8.

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And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with Him. Matthew XVII 1-3.

they dared not; for if any man had denied that John was a prophet, his reputation, if not his life, had been gone that day. They were cunning men, and they were accustomed to snares; and they saw the snare, and would not walk into it. "We do not know; we cannot tell." "Neither shall I tell you My authority." And, in the presence of the whole people, He put the Pharisees, for the last time, to shame, and He did so with their own weapons.

Next day a very different deputation approached Him, and it might be supposed that they came of their own accord. As the Gospels, however, put it, and as we ourselves know from the action of the Pharisees, this deputation consisted of puppets—well-dressed, but empty-headed puppets, dancing at the pulling of the Pharisees' strings. Between the Herodians—that is to say, speaking in quite a general way, the people attached to the Court of Herod—and Jesus there had been no conflict. In their eyes He was a vulgar fanatic, and to Him they were people who preferred a dancing-girl to John the Baptist. When you see them face to face, this group of courtiers in purple and fine linen, with high looks, and with mincing speech, and opposite them Jesus in His plain and peasant garments, you see this present world incarnate in its basest and meanest form, and you see Jesus unafraid, confident, spiritual, with vision reaching beyond this Temple and its disputes, beyond the cross and death, the preacher of the unseen world—the world of righteousness, peace, and joy.

The Herodians would never have dreamt of asking any question of Jesus, had they not been moved by the Pharisees. The Herodians had no position whatever among the people except in connection with the court, and the favour of Rome was the life of Herod. If the people should turn against the Herodians, or if the Roman Emperor should withdraw his support from Herod's miserable, tinselled court, it would disappear, and

every man in it. What a clever thing it would be if Jesus could be forced into a political difficulty, and be obliged to pass his opinion upon the rightfulness or wrongfulness of submitting to the Roman yoke! If Jesus were obliged to declare against the Roman government, then latent patriotism had burst into a flame, and Herod's throne had been in danger. If, on the other hand, He declared in favour of the Roman government, then the people had left Him, and it was doubtful whether He would have escaped from the Temple with His life.

They come to Him, these Herodians, with great courtesy, and with all the manners of a court; they tell Him how much they think of Him; they tell Him how much they depend upon His advice; they assure Him that He is a man uplifted above the world, and indifferent to human opinion. Behind the courtiers, with their false, honeyed words bending before the Master, we can see the Pharisees, who have briefed the empty Herodians with the courteous speech, suggesting to them at every turn what they shall do. "All we desire to know is this (you can tell us true of all men): is it lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar?"

As far as one can feel the pulse of the narrative the Herodians never gave Jesus a single serious thought, and He did not answer them. He looked beyond them at the hypocrites, who desired to put a great prophet into a dilemma—a dilemma either of revolution or of treason to His country. "Bring Me," said Jesus, "a penny." Although He was that day the centre of the Temple crowd, and though that day He would easily lay in the dust every one of His opponents, He does not seem to have even had a purse or a single coin. "Bring Me," He said, "a penny." And the group come closer and bring it, the Herodians not understanding, and the Pharisees watching and beginning to tremble. "Whose is this image and superscription?"

said Jesus: and they said, "Cæsar's." "You come, then, to ask whether you ought to pay tribute to Cæsar or not, while Cæsar's money is running in your land; and you know as well as I do, that if you accept the king's coinage you have owned the king's government. You ask Me a political question. Pharisees, when did I ever meddle with your local politics, when did I ever create disturbances in this land, when did I ever preach a revolution? Do you remember a man coming to Me down in Galilee, and asking me to settle between him and his brother because they had quarrelled over an inheritance, and I refused, as I ever refuse, to have anything to do with worldly affairs? Mine is a spiritual kingdom. I come not to arrange your relation to the Roman government; I have told you I came to deal with your souls. I warned you that you were slaves not to Rome, but to your sins. Settle with the Herodians the question of Cæsar; settle with Pilate the question of Pilate; and then settle the greater question which you have not settled and are not willing to settle—the question of the kingship of conscience and the rule of righteousness over your souls."

When this was over, we are willing to believe that the Pharisees were not prepared for another attack; but the local jealousy of the council, although allayed for a little time in order that both parties might unite in the persecution of Jesus, was still existent, and came into evidence. The Sadducees—that is, the priests and skeptical portion of the nation—came forward in their own person; and if one desires to understand the character of the Jewish priesthood and the coarseness of the lower scepticism, let him read the question that they put to Jesus. They did not believe in a future life; and, not believing in the future life, they did not believe in any of the beautiful things which are unseen and eternal. They were not men in earnest; they were not thinking men; they were

men with cheap objections and clever gibes; and now they came with one of their miserable mockeries at the greatest hope which has ever lived in the human heart—the hope of the future life.

One of their pet jests had gone the round of their feasts at Jerusalem, when they had drunk too much wine and their hearts were gross within them; and the man who had introduced it had ever since been considered a wit—a man with a searching intellect quick to dispel foolish delusions and maudlin sentiment about a future life. "If there is to be a future," they ask, "what would happen in a case like this? According to our law, when a man dies and leaves a widow who is childless, his brother has to marry her; so it came to pass that there were seven brothers, and six married their brother's widow in turn; now, in the life to come, whose wife shall she be?" We understand now what manner of life the Jewish priests were living, and what kind of men they were. They not only uttered this pert indecency in the face of the people; it is incredible, but they repeated it looking into the eyes of Jesus Christ!

What He suffered on that occasion, and on many others of the same kind! We know how He reverenced women and little children. We know with what delicacy He shrank from those hideous sensual questions which some people are ever dragging into the light and using as subjects for obscene controversy. They asked Him this foul question in the house of God; and with scorn, although with evident repression of Himself, He said to them: "Jews, how can I speak to you of the future life; it is impossible, for you have not the souls to appreciate or to inherit it: you care nothing for the life to come." Then, before He parted from the subject, He lifted it, as He ever did, on to its real level, and answered, not these men, who could not have understood the answer, but you and me, when in our

low moments we lose the hope of everlasting life. His answer was in a Jewish form, but the kernel of it is easily found. "Was God the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, or is He to-day the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? If a man has in him the heart to trust in God and the heart to follow God through the seventy or eighty years of his present life—a heart to love God and to thirst for God—is there no God to correspond with that heart? and if the man lies down and dies, believing that he is lying on the bosom of the Eternal, is this, the noblest achievement of the human soul, only a hideous delusion? Does not Abraham prove God an eternal God? And God is not ashamed to-day because he has satisfied Abraham." We have been horrified at the indecency of the men and at the pain of our Master; and now we could almost thank them, because from the depths of their filthy imagination He has raised the question at once to the heights of light and supreme reason.

They left—we dare not hope they were ashamed of themselves—and we feel that the Herodians, Sadducees, and Pharisees were not men who could understand the Master. Are all His audience dark of mind and gross of heart? Those lips will soon be closed in the dust of death; and this, the greatest Teacher that ever spoke to any generation, will not be able to answer another question. Is there no man who will seize this last opportunity and ask a worthy question?

At last, after all these deputations had been swept away in confusion, an honest scholar came to ask a question that had long been lying in his mind. It was a point in theology about which this scribe was perplexed and it might be called pedantry, but it was real; and if you strip off the covering, it was a question that went to the root of things. They had had an academic argument in the Jewish schools as to which was the most important commandment, and this man felt that the de-

bate had a spiritual interest. "Master," he said (he comes to Christ representing no person but himself), "which is the chief commandment, that when I know it I may keep it and receive life everlasting?"

As Jesus looks on him, the just scorn which we saw a moment ago upon his face passed away. Did Jesus ever argue and put to confusion an honest man? Never; and He never will. Everywhere and in all circumstances, if we be honest, though we make mistakes, we shall have kindly judgment at the hands of Jesus Christ. His face softened, His eye brightened; here is a man after His own heart. They stand out together from among the people, our Master and an honest man. "Thou knowest," said the Saviour, "that, when the commandments are summed up, the first of them is this, 'Love thy God'; and the second is this 'Love thy neighbour'; and these together are chief of all the commandments, and the crown and the fruit of eternal life." He might have argued a little, this scholar, and there are people who have the heart to argue, about love not being sufficient; but this was an ingenuous and a spiritual man. "Master," he said, "Thou hast said well; Love is greatest," and then the whole of the teaching of the prophets—of Amos, Micah, and Isaiah—came pouring into his mind, lit up by the touch of Jesus—"Love, Master, is all in all."

Again Jesus looked at him. Hypocrites He had dealt with; fools He had dealt with; sceptics He had dealt with; but here was a disciple. "Thou art not far," He said—"thou art not far from the kingdom." And with these last gentle words, in which we see the Master fling open the door of the kingdom to all who have true hearts, and bid them enter, the final encounter of Jesus Christ with His enemies closed in grace and charity.

Chapter XXVII: Before the Council

IT would be with a sense of relief that Jesus accepted arrest and stood a prisoner at last before the supreme court of His nation. His relations with the ruling class had been strained from the beginning of His public ministry, and during the last year they had become unbearable. For a public teacher the most unkindly atmosphere is one of suspicion and prejudice; the most genial is one of candour and sympathy. It was fast becoming impossible for Jesus to preach the Gospel with abandonment of mind, because it was imperative for Him to defend Himself against outrageous charges and poisonous insinuations. Within the arena of open debate Jesus had met and worsted His opponents at every turn; but this had only fed their hatred. His moral victories had delivered His soul; they had condemned His life. There was no use in delaying the final issue; the rulers had completed their plans; He had placed Himself in their grasp; let Him be tried for His life according to law. He did not, in the state of feeling, expect justice; He was prepared for the cross; He only had one desire — that the end should not tarry. "What thou doest," He said to Judas, with a touch of impatience, "do quickly." And then Judas left to fire the mine.

Whatever may have been the fanaticism of the Jewish character, the spirit of Jewish law was merciful in the extreme. Under no system has there been a more anxious desire to guard the rights of a prisoner, or to allow him opportunities of escape. As regards his own evidence, and the testimony of the witnesses, and the time of the trial, and the action of the judges, the accused had every advantage. It is not vain prophecy to say that if the processes of law had been observed, Jesus would have been acquitted. There are occasions, however, when passion can be restrained by no form, and the council were determined that by fair means or foul Jesus should die. It does seem true, as theology has suggested, that this Man was the innocent substitute for other men's sins, for every arrangement of justice was upturned in His case, and He who was the most innocent of men, was treated as the most guilty. The trial of Jesus was, from beginning to end, a travesty of justice; and although it may be granted that our Master was a heretic according to the Jewish creed, as far as law went His was a judicial assassination.

The sustained course of injustice began with His arrest, which was accomplished with every circumstance of treachery and violence, in the Garden of Gethsemane by a band composed partly of Roman soldiers, partly of Temple servants. There were only two circumstances in which an accused person could be arrested before his trial in Jewish practice—if it was supposed that he would escape, or that he would offer resistance. As the council was perfectly aware, neither alternative applied to Jesus. Instead of showing any desire to evade their authority He had come up to the capital and practically presented Himself for arrest, and the only danger of tumult among the people lay in the violence of the council. If Jesus was simply summoned to appear and to defend His teaching before the council, He would certainly not refuse, and his followers, from certain past collisions, had

no reason to fear the result. The midnight arrest, planned with so much cunning and treachery, was a gross mistake, because it was a flagrant illegality and a wanton indignity. Jesus would allow no resistance to be offered. He checked Peter's folly instantly, for violence would have put Him in the wrong and justified their action; and He protested, with indignation, against their conduct. "Was He a common criminal and a mere brigand, that they should come out against Him with swords and staves?" His captors were not, however, in a mood to listen to any protest, and, going to the extreme of illegality, they led Jesus away bound.

As they had arrested Jesus with force, they were under the deeper obligation to bring Him to a regular trial without delay; but their next proceeding was to take Jesus not to the Sanhedrim, which was a competent court, but to the palace of Annas, who was not even a magistrate. No doubt there was a strong reason for haling Jesus before this man, and no doubt he was anxious to examine Jesus. Years ago Annas had been himself High Priest, and was removed from office by the Roman authorities for his arrogance. Although a private person, he was the acting head of the priestly party, a man of enormous wealth, crafty ability, and unscrupulous character —the type of a successful, influential ecclesiastic of the highest rank. It may be assumed that the final plot against Jesus was hatched in that palace, and that the strong will of Annas stiffened the courage of the council. Jesus would be perfectly aware that He was face to face with His most dangerous and powerful enemy, and He would also know that, as an ex-High Priest, Annas had in his own person no judicial position. One may therefore be certain that the first examination of the Master, which by an ambiguity in the narration might have taken place before either Annas or Caiaphas, did not take place before Annas. Very likely the old priest was content to study

Jesus, and did not care to ask Him questions. As soon as his curiosity was satisfied Jesus was removed to the palace of Caiaphas, the High Priest of the day and Annas' son-in-law, where a legal court was waiting to receive the case. So it remains that before Jesus' trial began He had been twice wronged, once by His arrest, and second by being taken to a private house that he might be exhibited to a disgraced and wirepulling ecclesiastic.

The court before which Jesus appeared for His first examination, and which might be called a court of the first instance, was a committee of the Sanhedrim, meeting under the presidency of the High Priest. Its duty was to conduct the preliminary examination, and, in case of presumptive guilt, to send the accused to the full Sanhedrim for final examination and sentence. No objection could be taken to the judicial body before whom Jesus now stood, but the gravest objection is to be taken at once to their procedure. According to Jewish law — and it is also in accordance with justice — the first step is to let the prisoner know the crime with which he is charged. With the Jews this was done not by an indictment, as in western custom, but by the chief witnesses, whose testimony was the accusation he had to meet. As soon, therefore, as Jesus stood before Caiaphas in this first stage, and before He was asked any question, the witnesses ought to have appeared and given their evidence. Until that point there was no case before the court, and the judges should not have known why Jesus stood at their bar. As it was, the High Priest, in the very teeth of the law, and acting as if he were a prosecutor — which of course he was in fact — instead of a judge, began to question Jesus about His teaching and about His followers, so that the court might gather evidence of crime from His own lips. An extremely convenient and simple method of managing a case, and one which might be very successful with a timid and con-

science-stricken prisoner. Jesus was neither, and He at once refused to be witness as well as accused, and reminded His judges that they were violating the clearest provisions of the law. He had not been a crafty conspirator, forming a secret society and teaching secret doctrine. On the contrary, He had taught in public places, as they knew, and discussed His message openly with the people. Why did they ask Him questions? Why did they not ask those who had heard Him? Here was the third illegality—to begin a trial without a charge, and then to endeavour to create a charge from the prisoner s lips. If Jesus' enemies had imagined that they could play fast and loose with the regulations of law unchallenged, they had now learned their mistake, for at every step Jesus had gained a legal victory—at His arrest, in Annas' palace, in the attempted examination. They were concussed into some respect for their own jurisprudence, and at last brought forward witnesses and a charge. The indictment, to take that first, as it emerges from the evidence, came to this, that Jesus had said, either that He would destroy, or that He was able to destroy, the Temple. This was a perversion of one of Jesus' striking sayings during His first public visit to Jerusalem, which had excited suspicion at the time, and had been laid up for future use. Practically it came to a charge of blasphemy against the Holy Place, and by inference against the worship and creed of the nation. As a ground for trial it was quite fair, since, if Jesus had wantonly attacked the national institutions He was liable to punishment, but everything depended on the witnesses. And the witnesses against Jesus were worse than useless for two damning reasons. One was that while it is an elementary condition of justice that there should be no collusion between the witnesses and the judges, those witnesses were notoriously arranged for and suborned by the judges, and the other was that they had learned their lesson so ill that they contradicted one another after a

flagrant fashion, and their testimony could not be accepted even by this partial court. As the witnesses had obliterated one another, there was no charge against Jesus, and He ought to have been declared innocent and set free. As it was He was kept bound till a meeting of the full Sanhedrim could be called in the early morning, and He be placed again on trial. Two more illegalities were now added to the list—the tampering with witnesses, and the imprisonment of an acquitted man.

The daylight was breaking when Jesus was brought for the first and last time before the Seventy, who, with the High Priest as president, made the supreme court of the nation, and the final stage of this momentous trial began. One expects some respect for law now, and some decency in proceedings, but Jesus fared as ill in the Sanhedrim as in its committee. After some irregular examination and some open insults the High Priest arose in his place and solemnly charged Jesus to declare whether He were the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed. The former charge of blasphemy against the Temple had disappeared, and a new one had been sprung on the prisoner; and in spite of the provision in Jewish law that no accused person should be invited to incriminate himself, the chief judge put this leading question to Jesus. The Master might have objected and kept silence; but with a court set on injustice, and thirsting for His blood, what purpose would be served by appeals to justice? Standing in face of the heads of the Jewish people a bound prisoner, He declared that He was the Christ, and that His judges of to-day, now vaunting themselves in their power, would see Him sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven. A paroxysm of fury seized the court, the High Priest rent his clothes, and the Sanhedrim condemned Jesus to death for the highest form of blasphemy.

Still faithful at every turn to their principle of injustice, the

court, in their final decision, accomplished two more violations of law. They found Jesus guilty of death for a crime which did not exist—claiming to be the Messiah; and they did not try Him for the crime they intended—claiming to be the Messiah and being an impostor. It was a satire on all the past history of the Jews that the Messiah could now never be accepted, since as soon as He declared Himself, He would be put to death without more ado, as happened to the real Messiah. They also began the trial at night, which, in a case so serious, was illegal, and they concluded it on the day before the Sabbath, which was illegal, and they passed sentence without adjourning four and twenty hours, which was illegal. In their frantic haste to secure the death of Jesus the chief council of His nation trampled under foot every safeguard afforded to the humblest criminal, and carried the death of Jesus with enthusiastic acclamation. It was the exposure and condemnation of the rulers of the Jewish nation. For about three years the Master had taught and lived the gospel of the Divine Love among this people, with the result that the Jewish Church would have dealt more kindly with Him if He had been a highway robber or a religious hypocrite. So fierce was the hatred of goodness among the priests: so unreasoning was the fear of reality among the Pharisees. The verdict on Jesus was the victory of the ecclesiastical and dogmatic spirit at its worst.

Chapter XXVIII: Before Pontius Pilate

WHEN the supreme court of the Jewish people tried Jesus and found Him guilty of blasphemy, the Sanhedrim had done its utmost, but the persecutors of Jesus were still far short of their end. Prejudiced and venal judges might override every form of Jewish law intended for the protection of the accused, and might prostitute the very principles of equity to convict Jesus: they might denounce Him with strong words, and declare Him worthy of death with unanimous voice; but one thing they could not do, and that was to put Him to death. The position of the Sanhedrim was like that of the ecclesiastical courts in the Reformation days, which could condemn to death, and did so on a large scale and with much alacrity, but had to hand the condemned over to the civil power that the sentence might be carried into effect. There was this difference, however—that while the modern magistrates simply registered and fulfilled the decision of the priests, the Roman authorities were by no means so obedient to the Sanhedrim. As soon as the Jewish judges had finished their work with Jesus they had the prisoner conveyed to the Roman procurator, and they accompanied him in force lest their illegal verdict should be

overruled, and, after all their endeavours, Jesus should escape. Pontius Pilate, as the representative of the emperor, had imperial authority in his province, subject always to the appeal to Rome; but this authority he was obliged to use in accordance with the policy of his state. The Romans, with much wisdom, were accustomed to allow to every conquered nation as much liberty as might be consistent with the absolute supremacy of Rome, and to interfere as little as possible with local affairs. Unto each people was granted the use of their own religion and their own laws, with only this condition in the matter of religion—that they should not interfere with any other; and this restriction in law—that the power of life and death should remain with the Roman official. As a rule, the Romans were strongly disinclined to meddle with religious squabbles, but they were very sensitive to the slightest suggestion of treason against the emperor. When the Jews brought Jesus to the bar of Pilate, the danger was, that he would refuse to have anything to do with a point of theology, and their cue was to convince the Roman judge that Jesus had been fostering a revolution against the government.

What, however, they hoped was, that the procurator, busied about many things at that season and disinclined to have any controversy with the nation assembled for Passover, would be content with the acknowledgment of his authority, and ratify any sentence they might have passed. It is suggested by the circumstance of the Jews presenting Jesus without any accusation that Pilate took a very formal view of his duties, and did not trouble himself to inquire into cases. They forgot that there was a difference between Barabbas and Jesus, and to-day the Jews found Pilate in another mood. With the instinct of a judge he compared the noble face of the prisoner and the evil countenances of the priests, whose chiefs he knew well and did not respect. It was evident to any person that this was no bandit

or common malefactor whom they had hauled to the judgment seat, and that their eagerness was rather an outburst of fanaticism than the passion for justice. Pilate must go to the bottom of this matter, as he was a Roman and procurator of Judea, and he demanded to know the charge against the prisoner.

This unexpected curiosity of Pilate was a distinct check to Jesus' persecutors, who had hoped to pass their case through the Roman court without investigation. They were annoyed as Jews, because Pilate had asserted his latent authority with emphasis in face of the public; they were embarrassed as pleaders, because they were perfectly aware that the charge on which they had condemned Jesus in the lower court would not serve their turn here. If Jesus had spoken disrespectfully of the Temple, which they knew He had not, it would be rather a certificate of common sense to Pilate; and if they urged Jesus' assertion of Messiahship, the Roman would not know what they said. They were not ready with the other charge on the instant, and lost their tempers—not for the first time in this case. Were they going to be questioned and called to account at every turn? Was it any pleasure to them to visit Pilate's court? "If he were not a malefactor," they answered sullenly, "we would not have delivered him unto thee."

When Pilate received this discourteous reply, he understood the situation, and knew that he was master. It was, as he suspected, a conspiracy of those tricky, unscrupulous, revengeful priests, and he was to be the tool to do their behest. This victim of theirs was a Jew of nobler character with whom they had quarrelled about religion, and to please their spite Roman law was to put Him to death without trial. Let them understand that even a Jewish provincial had a right to better treatment. Without fair trial Pilate would not condemn Jesus, and without a charge he could not try Him, and so it would be

best for the priests, he suggested with grim suavity, and it would also save all friction, that they should take Jesus away and try Him according to their own law. As if they had not done so, as if Pilate did not know they had, as if their difficulty was not to judge Jesus, but to get Jesus crucified. With much bitterness they confessed their desire, and acknowledged Pilate's authority. Did he think that they would have brought their prisoner to him if they could have managed their own business? "It is not lawful for us," they said bitterly, "to put any man to death."

By this time they were ready with a charge which Pilate would understand without any difficulty, and which would surely remove his scruples. Once again His prosecutors changed the ground of guilt, and now they betook themselves to straightforward and unjustified falsehood. A few days ago the Herodians had laid the trap of treason for Jesus, with their question about paying tribute to Cæsar, and Jesus had put them and the Pharisees who inspired them to confusion. They did not ask the question now: they boldly made the assertion. What mattered it that Jesus had been careful never to say one word against the Romans? that He had cast His shield over the tax-gatherers? that His whole teaching had been against revolution? It was expedient that this man should die, or else the nation would be destroyed—it was His death in the end which did destroy the nation—and so it did not matter much what was the accusation so long as it secured the crucifixion. This is His crime: "He has been inciting the people not to give tribute to Cæsar, and claiming Himself to be a King."

Pilate may have been contemptuous and unprincipled; the whole incident shows that he was not stupid, but that he had a very shrewd insight. Had Jesus been one of the zealots, who were ready to rise at any time against the Roman legions and to reduce society to anarchy, Pilate would have identified

him at a glance and taken sharp measures. Only it would not have been the Jews who would have been the prosecutors. This poor man, in His peasant dress, and with His gracious face, may have been an offender against some absurd Jewish law, but He was no revolutionary against the Romans. Pilate took Jesus apart, and with a certain not unkindly irony, asked whether He was the King of the Jews. And Jesus, who would hardly answer His own council in their insolence and hypocrisy, was candid to the Roman magistrate; who was not His enemy, who was rather His friend. "In the sense in which you and these priests would understand the word, I am not a king; I have no soldiers, and no sword must be used for Me; the emperor need have no fear of Me. In another sense I am a King with a kingdom which will be far wider than the Roman empire. My kingdom is not that of the sword, but of truth; and I reign not over men's bodies but over men's souls." As Pilate looked on this calm, beautiful enthusiast, with his unworldly hopes and spiritual dreams, the futility of life came upon the cynical Roman. "What is truth?" said Pilate, and he did not wait for any answer—what use was it? —but he returned to the Jews and declared that he could find no fault in Jesus.

It was a just judgment, worthy of the empire and the law which the procurator represented. It must ever remain a satisfaction to the disciples of Jesus that our Master received one honest trial in His life, and was declared innocent before the highest tribunal of earth. If Pilate had only stood fast in his integrity, and given effect to his sentence! But he was not trying an ordinary prisoner, and before him lay the keenest ordeal. At his decision the storm burst forth of disappointment, malice, insolence, anger, and it beat furiously on Pilate's judgment seat, so that he was shaken, and, hesitating, lost his opportunity, and, before all was done, lost himself. He had dealt with mobs be-

fore after a very unscrupulous fashion, but in the end he had not gained; now his cruel deeds and humiliating defeats laid hold upon his imagination. He was afraid to clear his court and send the priests back to Caiaphas' palace. He was not yet ready to reverse his decision and hand Jesus over to his prosecutors. As he sought for a way of escape, his ear, sharpened by anxiety, caught the word Galilean, and Pilate conceived an adroit stroke of policy. He would send this embarassing prisoner to Herod, Jesus' own monarch for trial; thus at once conciliating the Tetrarch, and ridding himself of Jesus. Herod was much pleased with this courtesy, and was anxious to see Jesus do miracles; but the fox was too cunning to undertake a trial, so Jesus was cast back on Pilate—flung from one to the other, as an offence, Whom generations to come would welcome as their Saviour.

Pilate, whose nerve was rapidly departing, now tried one expedient after another to save Jesus without risk to himself, for the personality of our Master cast a spell over him, and his wife's dreams had increased his awe. He would scourge Jesus, as a warning to this harmless enthusiast not to meddle with dangerous affairs, and let Him go, but this concession of injustice would not satisfy instead of the cross. He would offer them the choice of a prisoner as an act of grace, either Barabbas, a famous bandit, a Rob Roy and Robin Hood kind of person, or Jesus of Nazareth; and he supposed that for very shame even the priests would have taken Jesus, but they simply clutched at Barabbas. As for Jesus, He must be crucified. Then Pilate washed his hands in token that he would take no responsibility for what was to follow, and, going from one injustice to another, he gave Jesus to his brutal soldiery to be scourged, and afterwards—a pitiful device—he brought out the bleeding victim, and let the people see the gentlest of prophets and most gracious of benefactors with the crown

of jagged thorns on His head and the signs of unspeakable insult on His face. "Behold the Man!" Pilate said, with a mysterious emotion, in the vain hope that the heart of the people would be touched by the sight of outraged love; but the fanatics, unreasoning and implacable still, chanted their death song, "Crucify Him! crucify Him!"

As the procurator stood irresolute, torn between justice and fear, he heard some voice, louder than the others, declaring that Jesus had claimed to be God, and the awfulness of Jesus deepened in his imagination. Once more Pilate led Jesus into the hall of judgment, and now he asked Him fearfully whether, indeed, He were divine. Jesus was silent. Could speech avail anything now with this temporising, cowardly man! No answer; and Pilate, who was much shaken, lost patience. "Have I not power to set Thee free, or to condemn Thee to Calvary." Jesus looked on this helpless shadow and semblance of a man, who had not power enough to obey his conscience, or bid defiance to a crew of fanatics, and again the grace of Jesus overcame them, and He pitied His judge. He acknowledged the power of the state, as He had ever done, and honoured civil authority—reminding Pilate that he was commissioned of the Eternal, and He apportioned the sin of His trial, with equal hand, assigning the larger share to the Jew and not to the Roman. If the Romans were His executioners, they were unwilling. It was the Jews who hungered for Jesus' death. They, therefore, not Pilate, should have the blame. Once more Pilate pleaded for Jesus before he spoke the words which would send the Master to the Cross, and leave an indelible stain on Roman justice. "Behold your King!" and then the rage of the priests and the mob, which had been rising and swelling for three hours, broke all bounds and went at large. The persecutors forgot dignity and prudence. They trampled under foot the patriotism and traditions of their

nation. If this detested man could only be put to death, they would deny their national rights. "We have no king but Cæsar!" cried the priests, thirsting for blood; and then they began to murmur with ominous suggestion: "If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend." Already, with the imagination of one conscious of many acts of injustice, Pilate saw himself accused to the moody and jealous tyrant who ruled the world, and to save himself he must sacrifice Jesus. After an agony of anxiety and the last degradation of self-respect, the priests had won, and the long feud of the Pharisees was satisfied. Pontius Pilate, at the bidding of Jesus' own nation, and with the full knowledge that Jesus was innocent, ordered the Master to be crucified. Because He had done good in ways which the religious party did not like, and because He preached truth which they did not wish to hear, and because He associated with classes which they despised, Jesus received His reward, and that was the cross.

One cannot bid good-by to the judge of Jesus, to whom was given a solitary opportunity, and who misused it so miserably, without vain regret and a devout imagination. If the procurator of Judea had obeyed his own conscience, and vindicated the majesty of Roman law, if he had declared Jesus innocent from his judgment-seat, with authority, and rescued Him from the hands of His enemies, then He had gained unto himself everlasting renown. Jesus might afterwards have been stoned to death by a Jerusalem mob—very likely He would—and Pilate might have been recalled in disgrace to Rome; but the friends of the Master over all the world would have remembered with just pride that in the hour of His extremity Jesus found protection under the Roman eagles, and they would have placed the name of His brave, incorruptible judge next in order to the holy apostles. Pilate was conscious of a moral crisis, and aroused himself to do his part. He had for his aux-

iliaries the radiant innocence of Jesus to guide him, the falsehood of the priests to repel him, the integrity of Roman law to support him; the message of his wife to warn him; but he played the coward in the end, and perpetrated the judicial crime of the ages, because his evil past, his treachery and his bloodshed, arose to condemn and hinder him when the most splendid deed of justice was within his grasp.

Chapter XXIX: The Death of Jesus

WITHIN the length and breadth of the New Testament Scriptures only one death is described at large, and over that death four biographers linger with fond and intimate touch. From the beginning of Jesus' death scene to its close one feels that every word has been treasured, and every sign has been noted, and that at every turn the natural passes into the supernatural, and the significance of the great event assumes the highest spiritual proportion. According to the writers this has been the death of deaths, that death through which death itself has been vanquished, and the supreme victory obtained for the human race which the Master loved, and for whose everlasting benefit He laid down His life.

It was about nine o'clock in the morning when the trial of Jesus before Pilate was concluded, and the Roman judge, false to his conscience and false to Roman law, gave orders for Jesus' execution. The prisoner was then handed to a guard of Roman soldiers, composed most likely of a hundred and twenty men, and commanded by a centurion. They removed the soldier's cloak in which He had been mocked as a pseudo-emperor, and clothed Him again in His own garments. His cross

was then brought and placed upon His shoulders, the two beams being arranged like the letter "V," and making a weight which He was ill able to endure. Upon His breast was placed the charge on which He was condemned, and this in default of anything else would be the title placed upon the cross. Before Him went a soldier declaring His crime, and round Him would march a bodyguard. Two common robbers, or it might be political offenders, who through hatred of the Romans had taken to a brigand life, and who were waiting execution, were condemned to die with Jesus, and along with them He marched to Calvary. As the procession wound its way through the narrow streets there is no sign that the Jewish men encompassing it on every side were touched with repentance or with pity. Their minds had been inflamed by the priests, and their demands had been gratified by Pilate, and now that Jesus was about to be crucified they were ready to see their malignant desire carried out to the bitter end. The hearts of the Jewish women were more tender, and perhaps less logical, for they could not forget how Jesus had sympathised with women, and they were not able to endure the sight of His humiliation and His pain. As Jesus passed within His guard of steel, and carrying upon His weary shoulders the heavy instrument of His death, the daughters of Jerusalem could not control themselves, but burst into passionate weeping. Jesus was profoundly touched, and stopped for a brief space to speak to the women, because unto His mind their condition and that of their children were harder than His. What must happen to a city which had treated its chief prophet after this fashion, and whose citizens had given themselves up to the most hopeless bigotry and the fiercest fanaticism? Although Jesus did not share the gross idea of Jewish patriotism, which thought only of rebellion against the Romans and deliverance by the sword, He loved the people

from which He sprung with all His heart, and desired for them the chiefest good. As He once looked upon Jerusalem, lying in its splendour and in its unbelief, He burst into tears, mourning chiefly because His people had not known the day of their visitation, and that the things of their peace had been now hidden from their view. Their doom was irrevocable, for it was sealed by His own rejection, and He saw afar off with prophetic eye this city dashing itself against the iron buckler of Rome, and perishing with unspeakable shame and suffering. As the thought of the punishment of Jerusalem arose before His mind He said to the women, "Weep not for Me, however great My agony may be; weep for yourselves, since yours will be greater. If they do these things in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?"

As they pass out from the city gate it is evident that Jesus is no longer able to carry the two heavy beams, and that the soldiers will be delayed on their march. They look around for some assistant who will relieve Jesus of the burden of the cross, since no Roman could be expected to touch the shameful tree, and a countryman called Simon, coming into the city to keep Passover, is pressed into their service. The cross is lifted from Jesus' shoulders and placed upon Simon, and he makes the fourth, together with Jesus and the malefactors, within the guard of soldiers. Tradition and Art have also loved to dwell upon a third incident, which is said to have taken place between Pilate's judgment hall and Calvary. The Virgin is standing with her friends, Salome, the mother of John, and St. Mary Magdalene, and that other Mary. As Jesus passes, His mother springs forward to meet Him, and the Son and the mother have one brief moment together, after which Jesus is hurried onward to the cross, and the Virgin is supported by her friends, who also mourn, but recognise her supreme sorrow.

The site of the Crucifixion is a matter of keen controversy, and opinion will be long divided regarding the accuracy of tradition. The place of a skull was certainly situated outside the city wall, but whether it be the same as that on which the Church of the Sepulchre stands, or whether it be another at some distance, will depend on the position of the city boundaries. While this subject will always afford a field for exploration and discussion, the exact position of the spot does not greatly concern the pious heart, and that which has been chosen at an early date and sanctioned by a long tradition, will always satisfy the disciples of Jesus as a place to which they can make their pilgrimage, and where they can remind themselves of the love which was faithful unto death. As the twenty-fifth day of December has been accepted throughout the greater part of Christendom as our Lord's birthday, although we know that that cannot have been the date, so the Church of the Sepulchre may be received as the monument and remembrance of Calvary.

Crucifixion was of all death punishments the most cruel and the most degrading, and it was one abhorred by the mercy of the Jewish law. The form of the cross varied, sometimes being what is usually called a St. Andrew's cross, where the two beams cross one another at acute angles, after this fashion X; sometimes being in the shape of the letter T, where the horizontal beam is laid upon the top of the perpendicular. Sometimes the horizontal beam was laid across the perpendicular about one fourth from its top, which is the form of the Latin cross, and of the cross on which Jesus was crucified. It is not likely that the cross was lofty, since it was enough for its purpose that it should raise the person to be executed a short distance above the ground.

When the procession arrived at the place of execution, the soldiers took the two beams from Simon's shoulder, and fastened

one in a hole which had been dug. They also would insert a slight projection midway in the perpendicular beam, on which the executed could rest as one sitting on a saddle, since the nails in the hands could not have sustained the weight of the body. Jesus is stripped of His garments, and the soldiers place Him upon the transverse beam as it lies upon the ground. They then stretched out His hands, and after, it may be, fastening His arms to the cross with ropes, they open the palms of the hands and through each they drive a nail. He is then raised up on the cross beam, and it is fastened to the upright post, while every motion is torture to the nerves of the hands and arms. His feet they place side by side, and each foot they pierce with a larger nail. Very likely the crown of thorns was still upon His head, so that if the cross be regarded as His throne, this King was not without His crown. When the Victim has been fastened to the tree, the soldiers' work is done, save the watching, and Jesus begins to die in the presence of His enemies. Before the piercing with the nails a cup of medicated wine had been offered to the Lord, which, according to kindly custom, was provided by certain pious women of Jerusalem to alleviate the sufferings of the crucified. As soon as Jesus had tasted the cup He refused to drink, because it was not in keeping with His dignity to shrink from suffering or to die in unconsciousness. Over His head they had placed an inscription in three languages, declaring Him to be the King of the Jews, which was a stroke of Roman irony, intended not as an insult to Jesus, but as an insult to the Jews. It was also an unconscious tribute to the universal reign of the Crucified, because He was described as King in the three great languages of the ancient world—the language of religion, the language of thought, and the language of power. Jesus Himself had assured His disciples that if He were raised up He would bring all men to His feet, and now by the cruel way of the cross He asserts

His kingly position. As a King He carried Himself all that day, and we can recognise the tragic fitness of the Master's death. It had not been becoming that He should be secreted in a Roman barrack to save Him from the Jews, and intolerable that He should be stoned to death by a street rabble. Unto sight it may have seemed a commonplace execution, but to vision the scene is invested with majesty. It is the sacrament of the Divine Love, and the apotheosis of suffering. Around the cross are gathered His enemies of the three years —the priests whose privileges He was supposed to have attacked, the Pharisees whose traditions He had denied, and the people whose prejudices He had offended. Against Him in His helplessness burst forth their malice and malignity, who had not generosity or humanity enough to leave a tortured and dying man in peace. They taunted Him with the claims which He had made; they even taunted Him with the power which He had used for the highest ends, and, most amazing gibe of all, they mocked Him because He had thought more of others than of Himself. "If Thou be the Messiah," they said, "come down from the cross"; while it was because He had fulfilled His Messiahship that He hung upon that cross. "He saved others," one said to his neighbour, "but," flinging the word at Jesus, "Himself He could not save." As His base enemies exulted and jeered below, above upon the cross, Jesus, with outstretched hands, was praying that this thing might not be laid to their charge. Seven times the Lord brake the silence of His sacrifice, and His first word was one of charity, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

While the Jews mocked at their Messiah, Whom Isaiah had foreseen and described in the most pathetic passage of Old Testament Scripture, and while the Messiah, faithful amid all their cruelty to His nation, had only thoughts of love towards them, and prayers for the Divine mercy, the soldiers, indiffer-

ent alike to Jesus and the Jews, were dividing the perquisites of an executioner. Jesus had little money any day of His life, and He had none at all when He came to die. All that the Son of God left was the covering of His head and the girdle round His waist, His outer garment, and His inner coat. This little heap of peasant clothing, which was stained with blood and marked with the traces of insult, lay at the foot of the cross. One soldier took this piece, another soldier took that, and the outer garment they divided into four parts; but when it came to the inner coat, it could not be divided. For it the soldiers cast lots, and some brutal legionary laughed aloud as he won the seamless garment which Mary had woven for her Son in Nazareth, and wherein mystics have seen the type of Christ's undivided Church.

There was no death so cruel as that of crucifixion, because the prisoner died not from the loss of blood, or in a short space of time, but through the lingering agony of open wounds, and the arrest of circulation at the extremities, and the tension of the nervous system, and the oppression on the brain and heart. Jesus would be crucified about ten o'clock, and He did not die till shortly after three, so that for five hours He endured this pain of torn nerves and intense thirst and racked body and throbbing brain. It is in such circumstances that even the bravest of men are apt to forget others; but it was in this supreme agony that our Lord fulfilled His own law that a man should bethink himself in life not of his own need but of the need of his brother man. Beside Him another man was enduring the same pain, who was suffering the punishment of his own sin, and to this man, ignorant and hardened, was revealed the spiritual beauty of our Master. While priests and Pharisees denied His Messiahship, the penitent thief acknowledged the authority of Jesus, even when that authority seemed to be vain and useless. Unto Jesus he appealed, and Jesus he acknowl-

edged to be a King, and in answer to this man's prayer, Jesus broke silence for the second time with His word of mercy, "Verily, I say unto you, this day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."

By this time the women who loved the Lord had come to Calvary, and with John were standing at a little distance. They drew near under the irresistible influence of love, which could not withdraw its eyes from the sufferings of Jesus, and yet was torturing itself in utter helplessness. Jesus' eyes fell upon His mother and upon His friend, and He forgot His own pain in pity for His mother's sorrow. It was not for her to see Him tortured and dying slowly on the cross. He also foresaw her loneliness after He was gone, and desired that she should have the kindliest of substitutes for Himself, one who would not only provide a home, but would share with her the treasure of her love and of her hope. John was her sister's son, and a man of the same spirit as the Virgin: he was Jesus' dearest friend and one of His chief apostles. From the cross Jesus committed His mother into the care of John, asking the Virgin to see in John another son who would take His place till Mary and Jesus met in the Father's house, charging John to accept the mother of his Lord and to deal with her as he would with Salome. Whether or not we are to understand that John took Mary away instantly to his own home, it is likely that at least that most sympathetic and tenderest of men withdrew her, who had been fitly called "Our Lady of Sorrows," from a scene which could only break a mother's heart, and that Mary did not return to the cross till all was over, when she was again allowed to touch the unconscious body which in infancy she had nursed in Nazareth. This was the third word of the cross which was the word of filial piety.

It is now twelve o'clock, and, according to the evangelists, a

sudden and awful darkness veiled the scene, during which the crowd stood in awestruck silence, and Jesus passed through His supreme agony. What the Master then endured no human mind can imagine and it does not become any human mind to speculate; but so fearful was the burden upon His soul that shortly before three o'clock, when the darkness lifted, Jesus Christ cried aloud with a lamentable voice, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" which was the fourth word of the cross and the word of agony. Its measure is the change from Father to God,— from "This is My beloved Son" to "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

At three o'clock the light began to return, and Jesus, exhausted by a conflict which was rather spiritual than physical, spoke to His guard and said, "I thirst." With this confession of bodily weakness, and this humble request, the Master comes very close to the heart, and proves Himself one touched with a feeling of our infirmity. It was His only appeal for pity, and it was made to the Romans. We are thankful that it was not made in vain, for a Roman soldier, whose name we should be glad to know, and whose dying agony we trust was relieved by some friendly hand, took the sponge which formed the stopper of his wine flask, and soaking it in the poor wine of a soldier's rations, placed the sponge on the end of a hyssop stalk and laid it on the lips of Jesus. This one act of kindness Jesus received upon the cross, and this "I thirst" of Jesus was the fifth of the seven words, and may be called the word of Humanity.

The soldier was not allowed to render this kindly act without interference, for certain of the Jews had misunderstood the words of Jesus' agony, and supposed that He had called not upon God, but upon Elias, who, the Jews believed, would appear before the Messiah and upon every great occasion of the national life. They begged the soldier to stay his hand that

they might wait for Elias, half expecting, as it appeared, that the great prophet of the Old Testament would show himself, but the soldier would not be hindered from succouring Jesus. Afterwards, when he had moistened the Lord's lips, he replied in irony, with a certain contempt of Jewish cruelty and Jewish bigotry, "Let alone now; we will wait for Elias." When Jesus had received the wine, His strength, which had run low, began to return, and His heart, which had sunk through spiritual travail, was lifted. The end was not far off now, and His work was almost done. He had declared the Gospel of God, and He had shown the character of the Father. He had fulfilled the hope of ancient days, and established the kingdom of God. Nothing more remained but that He should die, and so He said with a loud voice, thinking of the commission which He had received from His Father and the work of the three years, "It is finished"; and this was the sixth of the seven words, the word of perfection. Immediately thereafter the Master, from Whom none could take His life, but Who was willing to lay it down for God and man, cried again with a loud voice, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit," and having endured His last pain, and having rendered His last service, Jesus bowed His head and gave up the ghost, and was at rest in the bosom of God. So the chief saint of our race, and the chief victim of history, having drunk the cup of reproach and hatred unto its dregs, and having loved His fellow-men unto death, died with the word "Father" on His lips.

Epilogue: The Eternal Christ

THERE are four Christs known to men, but there is only one Living Christ who has created Christianity and is the object of faith to the Christian Church.

There is the man who was born at the beginning of this era in Palestine, and gathered a body of disciples, and produced an immense impression on the people, and was credited with various miracles, and left behind Him certain moving sayings, and was at last crucified.

> "*And on His grave, with shining eyes,*
> *The Syrian stars look down.*"

It is necessary that an intelligent person should have those facts in his mind, for without an actual basis of fact the life of Christ dissolves into a dream, but the knowledge of this Christ has no more spiritual effect upon the human race than a biography of Alexander or Socrates. This is the historical Christ. The second Christ has touched the imagination of the finest minds of the race, and has floated before them as a very lovely and attractive ideal. He looks down upon us from the Transfiguration of Raphael, He is the King Arthur of Tennyson's Idylls, He lives in the beautiful deeds and sacrifices of St.

Francis, He has done more for the most insensible and unromantic of us than than we are aware, but this Christ one only knows as he might admire a piece of art. This is the poetical Christ.

Another Christ came to fulfil the covenant of grace, and rendered perfect obedience to the Eternal Law, and expiated the penalty of our sins, and rose again for our justification, and has entered into Heaven to be the High Priest of God's House, and shall come again to judge the world. As time went on this Christ came to be little else than a frame on which the embroidered garments of doctrine were laid, while beneath their voluminous folds the Nazarene Himself is hidden and forgotten. No one can love this lay figure any more than an abstraction of the study. This is the theological Christ.

There is still a fourth Christ, Who lies in no grave, Who needs no picture, Who is secluded in no Heaven; Who revealed Himself to the disciples on the way to Emmaus; Who was persecuted by Saul of Tarsus; Who arose from His throne to receive the martyr Stephen; Who calls upon men to leave all and to follow Him; Who suffers with every Christian that sorrows, and toils in every Christian that serves, and rejoices with every Christian that gets unto himself the victory; Who still welcomes Magdalene, and teaches Thomas, and guides Peter, and is betrayed by Judas; Who still divides human opinion, is adored or misunderstood, is still called "Master," or sent unto the cross. This is the Living Christ, present, effectual, eternal.

When the Master gave up the Ghost on the cross, and pious hands laid His weary body to rest in Joseph's tomb, had His enemies finally triumphed, and was this the end of Jesus' life? If one looks into it, this is the question of questions for the minds of men, and beside it none is to be mentioned as regards significance or consequences. For thirty-three years Jesus had trusted in God, and loved His fellow-men, and lived above

this world, and trampled every kind of sin under foot. He claimed to be the Son of God, and to have come into this world to do God's work. He laid down His life with perfect singleness of heart upon the cross, and He declared that God would raise Him again from the dead. The Resurrection was to be the sanction of His life and death, it was to be the prophecy and earnest of His power and glory. If He were raised from the dead, then was He beyond doubt the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world, Who had overcome the enemy of the human race and opened the gates of immortality. If His body saw corruption in Joseph's tomb, and none again looked on Jesus Christ, then not only had the Pharisees and priests attained their design and done their will upon the Prophet of Nazareth, but sin has been unconquered and still wields an unbroken sway over our race. With a satisfaction tempered by nervous anxiety, His enemies saw Him die. With bitter regret, untouched by hope, His disciples buried Him in the Garden, and the very heart of human faith and of human hope hangs upon the issue.

The event of the third day does not merely concern the Christian Church, it also gravely affects the destiny of the human race. Whatever be a man's nation or a man's creed, whatever may be his personal history or his moral character, the deepest desire in his nature is for immortality—that when this short life is closed with its limitations and its defeats, its sorrows and its sin, he may begin again under better circumstances in another world. His profound but often unconfessed hope is that he may be assured of this immortality by evidence that will satisfy his reason and cause light to arise in his darkness. No doubt the Christ of Nazareth and of Jerusalem, who died at the age of thirty-three, has been an incalculable addition to the spiritual resources of humanity, and without Him the world had been a darker and crueler place; but the supreme object

of faith for the human soul, and the great gift which the Church presents unto the world, is the Christ who not only died but also rose again and is alive for evermore. As often as the disciples of Christ fail to realise this risen Christ and minimise their Gospel of everlasting life, they are not only unfaithful to their Master, but they also inflict bitter disappointment on the unbelieving world. There are many schools where the world can learn philosophy and morality, there is only one pulpit where this Evangel of Life is preached. When that message is declared with unfaltering note and is supported by reasonable evidence, then the heart of every hearer is in alliance with the preacher, and what a man has hoped he is now ready to believe. The resurrection of Him Who was crucified means that in the spiritual straits of life no man will be left alone, that the crushing sorrows of life are not without their more abundant consolation, that we are not finally separated from those whom we love, and have lost, and that the day is yet to break upon this present night.

For any one to believe that Jesus, Whom the Romans crucified, and Whose death was verified by the soldier's spear, burst the barriers of the tomb and appeared in the glory of a new life, is one of the highest acts of faith, and in its performance a man is hindered by two influences, one of which has always been present, and the other of which belongs to our own day. It has been always difficult for any person to believe in another world and an unseen life, simply because he has first been born into this present world and is largely governed by his senses. We are accustomed to the things which we see and can handle till it becomes a habit to consider the seen to be sure and the unseen to be imaginary. It is a conversion of reason and a revolution in our habits of thought when we conclude that the seen is passing and the unseen is eternal: when the invisible world overweighs and eclipses the visible: when the voices

from its mysterious province are clearer in our ears than the voices of our fellow-men. This faith marks an advanced stage in the spiritual history of the soul. In proportion as one carries this world in his heart he is not able to believe in the world which is to come; and in proportion as one is possessed with the spirit of the other world, he can see the things which eye hath not seen, and can hear the things which ear hath not heard. And this was the reason, according to the Gospel,—and it is also a very deep parable,—that Jesus could pass through the streets of Jerusalem in the days of His Resurrection unseen by priests and Pharisees, but was visible to St. John and the disciples.

The other influence is modern, and one from which a person in touch with his day can as little escape as he can resist the impressions of the senses. We are not in our time speculative and theological; we are rather historical and scientific; our desire is to know the facts of nature and of human life, to understand the things which are, rather than the reason of their being. It is inevitable, therefore, that there should be a reaction from the former conception of the Master, which treated Him as an exclusively supernatural being and His work as a supernatural drama. We turn from the Creeds to the Gospels, and we seek Jesus not in Nicea but in Galilee. Our desire is to learn the example of His life, and to receive the teaching of wisdom at His lips, and He has become to us, and not without great gain, a Master as well as a Saviour. But it were greater loss if He were only a Master and not a Saviour, and upon those terms we can never appreciate Christ. The analogy between Plato and his disciples can never be used to express the relation between Jesus and the human soul by any person with a sense of proportion, or without intellectual frivolity. The moment that a Christian comes to regard Jesus as a Greek regarded Plato, he has lost the living Christ and is trifling with his religion. It matters to us

nothing whether Plato is alive or dead, for we have the *Republic*. It is not enough for us to have the Gospel; we must also have Jesus. His words are the guide of His disciples; He Himself is His disciples' strength. He only is a perfect disciple who finds Jesus not only by the Lake of Galilee and in the Upper Room, but also beholds him by vision at the right hand of God, and realises Jesus' Presence in his daily life.

Just because the Resurrection of Christ means so much for human life its faith must not be grounded on sentiment, so that we shall simply believe because we wish, and our reason shall be swamped by our hearts. An intelligent person is bound by his conscience to criticise the evidence for this great event, and it is fortunate that the first witnesses are beyond reproach. The testimony of the disciples to the revelation of the third day is as strong as anything which can be produced for the best accredited fact in history. The apostles and the holy women were absolutely simple and honest country folk, without any guile of spirit or tricks of speech. There is not only no sign of artifice in their testimony, but the reader is annoyed because they are not more utterly overcome with excitement and amazement. Nor can it be said that when the Lord appeared they saw what they had expected, and were in reality only reading from the hope of their hearts instead of from the sight of their eyes. It was not only St. Thomas, but also St. John and St. Peter, who had sadly concluded, notwithstanding all that Jesus had said to them, that their eyes would never again rest upon their beloved Master, but that He, like all men before Him, had fallen before the great adversary. Their unbelief was indeed so great that the apostles could not credit the report of the women, and the most thoughtful of the apostles would not believe His own brethren, but declared that unless he could touch the very wounds of Christ he could not accept the Lord's Resurrection. It was also in the last degree inexpedient and dangerous

for them to declare the Resurrection, since it was bound to bring upon them the enmity of the Jewish rulers, and likely to send them to their Master's death. Nothing but profound conviction could have opened the mouths of the disciples and compelled them, in the face of the hostility of Jerusalem, to declare that the priests had not won, but that Jesus had obtained the victory. Upon these men also faith in the Resurrection produced its natural and conspicuous effect, since one cannot imagine any greater difference than between Simon, the son of Jonas, denying his Lord through fear of a servant girl, and St. Peter defying Jerusalem at the Day of Pentecost. Has it ever been known in the annals of evidence that a body of simple-minded men should bear witness to a fact which beforehand they were not able to believe, and whose declaration could only involve them in the last danger, and in the end should believe it so firmly that their faith has made them into heroes and into saints?

If the first disciples have borne convincing witness to the fact of the Resurrection, their successors during eighteen centuries have united in their witness to the power of the Resurrection. Whether or not one be prepared to believe in the Resurrection of Jesus he must accept the fact that Jesus created a new society upon the face of the earth which He called the kingdom of God, and which is now called the Church. This society owed its first success to the impulse of Jesus, and its life for a short period after His death might be explained by the after effect of Jesus' spirit and influence—a mere result of one of the laws of spiritual motion. When, however, Jesus had been dead, say, fifty years, and the last of the disciples who knew and loved Him had died, then this society ought also to have decayed and perished. On the contrary, it set out on a new conquest, and, notwithstanding many a defeat and failure, has gone since that day from strength to strength. Other re-

ligions have no doubt lived and conquered after the founder's death, but they have not been bound up by inextricable and spiritual ties with their founder. Before Jesus died He gathered His disciples in the Upper Room and told them of His departure. It seemed to them a hopeless and irredeemable disaster, for on Him they had depended for wisdom and for inspiration: present with Him they were strong, absent from Him they were helpless. What would become of them after He had finally departed, and they were left alone to stand in the midst of the world? He assured them that the tie between Him and them could never be broken, but that it would be spiritualised, —that it was expedient for them that He should depart from their sight because He would return to their hearts. During the ages to come they were to abide in His love, and He would abide in their lives, and all His grace would be at their service and in them He would reveal Himself in word and deed unto the world.

This was the promise of Jesus, and history is the witness of its fulfillment. The mysterious union of human souls with the Living Christ, which constitutes the strength of the Christian Church, has been proved by signs and wonders. It has been proved by the days in which the Church lost her sense of Divine fellowship and became cold and unbelieving; then the Church sank into an irreligious and worldly institution, helpless, hopeless, and corrupt. It has been proved by the days of revival, when the Church returned unto her first love and faith; then she arose in her might and conquered new provinces of the world, radiant, strong, and triumphant. From time to time the teaching of Jesus, like seed sown in the ground, has been visited by a springtime, and the commandments of Jesus judged to be ideal and quixotic have been embodied in the laws of countries and the institutions of society. Private individuals living narrow and lonely lives have shown them-

selves capable of heroic sacrifices, and, what is still finer, of patient continuance in commonplace duty, so that Heaven has been brought into earthly homes, and this, according to their testimony, has been due to the presence and grace of Jesus Christ. The apology for Christianity is not contained in the writings of scholars, but in the triumph of martyrs, in the joy of mourners, in the holiness of saints. If the Church as a body, and her members as single disciples, declare that their weakness has arisen from the absence of Christ, driven away by unbelief, and their strength has alone come from Christ when He returned in the power of His Spirit, what can be said against such witness? and why should it not be accepted as true? There is such a thing as the mirage of the desert, which has mocked the dying traveller, and the history of religion affords fantastic notions which have been the craze of society for a day and have vanished away. No one with a serious face can make any comparison between these passing delusions and the faith of Christ. There is also the oasis where the grass is green and the palm trees stand erect in their beauty, and the reason thereof is the unfailing spring which rises from the heart of the earth and yields its living water to the traveller as he journeys across the desert from the land which he has left to the land which he has never seen. That spring is the Spirit of the living Christ, Who "was dead," and is "alive for evermore": Who remaineth from age to age the strength and hope of the Race into which He was born and for which He died.

[THE END]